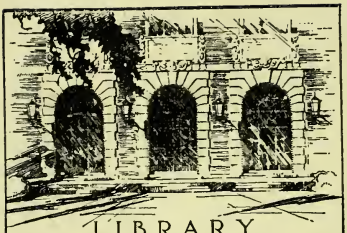

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WHITE AND RED

By J. R. HENSLOWE,

AUTHOR OF "DOROTHY COMPTON."

"A passage perillus makethe a port pleasant."
Ao. 1568. ARTHUR POOLE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL II.

LONDON:
KERBY & ENDEAN, 440 OXFORD STREET
1882.

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CHAPTER XIII.

FOR GOD AND THE KING.

> So all day long the noise of battle rolled
> Among the mountains.

EASTER-TIDE at Cennes. The flowers are budding in field and garden, the limes are putting forth tender green leaves, and the brooks that flow down to the Maine are swelled by the spring rains. It is all fresh and peaceful outwardly as of old; but the storm which is sweeping over the whole fair realm has not failed to visit even this remote spot. It is a sad festival even in the village church, for a constitutional priest has succeeded Père Florian, and the peasants stubbornly refuse to attend the church, and will not even supply the wax tapers for the functions there. They would, as they have

done further south, fairly drive him away, but the seigneur, whom they love, forbids that. They do nothing to cross *him*, and they say to one another that the troubles of the times are killing M. le Comte. They are mistaken there; no outside events would have that power; but none the less does Eugène de St Hilaire believe that his days will not be long. His mother died young, and so will he, and for this reason he gladly welcomes Victor de Limeuil under his roof again.

The latter, meanwhile, has not been idle. There has come to him at last, as comes to every one at least in such times, the great awakening from dreams to real and stirring life.

When the Vendéan insurrection fairly broke out in March, on the demand made by the Convention for thirty thousand men for service, he was a boy still, thinking perhaps

of the bride he was to bring home this year, but nothing of wider and sterner claims upon him. A few weeks have past, and he is a man. The rubicon is past, and he has been seeing something of the great mysteries of life and death.

As the boy Henri de la Rochejaquelein sat pondering in La Durbellière, until his aunt's voice said to him, "Dreamer, awake," and sent him forth to his great destiny, so to Victor de Limeuil some mere chance, as it were, rouses him into manhood, and makes him a leader of his people.

After their success on the 18th of March, when opposed for the second time to General Marée, the Vendéans, with their usual strange indifference to all ordinary proceedings, dispersed to their homes for Easter, having appointed places of meeting in April; very much as the Highland army in the "forty-five" acted in like circumstances.

Believing as he did in his own failing health, Eugène de St Hilaire would have urged the speedy celebration of his sister's marriage; but Victor de Limeuil's present position precluded that idea. He, as it were, was now a consecrated knight, vowed to a great crusade, and till that Holy War was accomplished there could be no question of marrying or giving in marriage. Moreover, Eulalie herself strenuously combated the notion when Eugène propounded his wish to her.

"How can I leave thee till thou art better?" she said reproachfully; "see how pale thou art looking, Eugène. Wait till the summer comes, and then one can see."

"Wait!" Eugène echoed, with a smile and a sigh. "Well, at any rate, one sees it is not to be thought of at present. Thy knight must fight for King and Holy

Church, and we must leave it all to the good God."

Victor de Limeuil is not altogether unchanged outwardly even, for he has been in circumstances calculated to wear off that perishable air of youth already. The peasant troops of the Royal and Catholic Grand Army, as they call themselves, are anything but amenable to discipline; for they insist on following each his own favourite leader, and besides, entirely decline to act as sentinels or form patrols. These duties, therefore, the nobles have been forced to take upon themselves, and Victor de Limeuil has learnt some sharp but salutary lessons by the time he arrives at Cennes.

It is a peaceful breathing space this Easter, when the three, on whose fate the destinies of France have so strong an influence (as on whose in this epoch have they not?) meet once more.

They talk together of many things on those few spring days that they have for each other. Of the terrible tragedy of the winter, which placed a helpless child on the blood-stained throne of France, of the army of Dumouriez, of the Convention, of Père Florian. . . .

"And we loved him so," says Eulalie, with a quivering lip; "he was very good—always. Surely—surely they could not have known how good."

"That makes little difference," says Eugène. "I remember once, long ago, when we were speaking of this Revolution which has come upon us since, but which one could see so plainly on its way, he said the innocent would suffer for the guilty. Assuredly he has suffered very willingly."

"But the guilt must surely lie heavy on those assassins," says Victor.

"Not more heavy than on those who have

come before us and have prepared all this," says St Hilaire. "It is what the good father said often until the day he left us, and I understand it better, every day, I think. This dark period is not only a great crime, but still more, it is a great retribution."

"But here, and in the west, there is nothing to complain of?"

"Nevertheless, it may come to our turn to bear the sins of our brothers. I look forward—you may see it if I shall not—to a better France coming out of the crucible which is moulding her now. A fairer and better and greater country than she has been for these three hundred years."

Victor's visit was cut shorter than he had anticipated, for, during the cessation of hostilities, a republican column was sent out from Angers to traverse the country. It neither perpetrated violence, nor met with any resistance; but, nevertheless, it was

safer that he should not be in the vicinity, and so he departed, travelling cautiously, back to the rendezvous.

Before he went away, Eugène de St Hilaire, in what he believed would be a final interview, solemnly bequeathed his sister to Victor's care.

"I would say, take her now," he said, with a sad smile, "but I know that is impossible. You must do your best for La Vendée and for our poor young King. She must stay with me as long as —. I trust you, Victor de Limeuil," he added, holding his friend's hand firmly.

"I accept the trust," said the other, eagerly. "I love Eulalie—I have always loved her. It will be the dearest task of my life to make her happy. And you—"

"Never mind me," said St Hilaire, quietly; "now let me call the child."

Eulalie was in her garden, absently exam-

ining the opening flower-buds, and wondering when the secret conference within would come to an end, or she be called to share it. She responded at once to her brother's summons, but turned shy and scarlet at the expression on Victor's face. Eugène simply repeated the substance of the conversation, and then joined the two young hands in a sort of second betrothal, as a comfort to himself, he said.

So Victor de Limeuil went back to do battle for God and the King, with a white cockade, made by Eulalie's small white fingers.

Perhaps that talisman nerved him, when, on the 4th of May, he, with De la Rochejaquelin, and two others, held the bridge at Thouars against the National Guard; and was one of the first to scale the walls of the town. At any rate, he was doing his duty manfully.

It was not his fault, any more than it was the fault of many others, who could only deplore what they could not prevent, that the undisciplined multitude which called itself an army, accomplished so little after all. Valiant, heroic, and devoted as its units were, they were too impatient of control to act with any certainty. Had it been otherwise, it is even possible that, after some one of their brilliant successes, they might have extorted their own terms from the Conventions, and have delivered the unhappy child, withering in the captivity of the Temple, for whose restoration they had taken up arms. It was not to be so. Louis XVII. was to die at eleven years old, the shadow of a King; and the war of La Vendée imprints itself on the page of history, as a strange reproduction in modern times of the Crusades, with all their purity and fervour of intention, and undefiled by the barbarities,

which were the necessary accompaniments of the rude ages which witnessed them. It offered no real check to the progress of the Revolution.

CHAPTER XIV.

FAITHFUL AND TRUE.

> Although unqueen'd, yet like
> A Queen and daughter to a King—
> For she commanding all, obeyed of none;
> Thus hath the course of justice whirl'd about,
> And left thee but a very prey to time.

October has come round again. Here, in Paris, the months have passed, leaving traces that it would be well for the world never to see again. The Convention has decreed the establishment of the Tribunal, which has sent, and is sending, its scores of victims to the guillotine, while the Public Accuser, Fouquier Tinville reproaches his officers with idleness in supplying food to that insatiable devourer. The Girondists have fallen, and the twenty-three deputies are even now awaiting their doom. They who have fed

on wild dreams of a perfect polity, who saw in the Revolution their hands have helped, a great regeneration, are swept into the chaos of destruction. They who regarded kings as among the tyrants of the earth that are to be swept away, survive the fall of the monarchy but by a few months. It is a strange and grim irony that delivers over to death these men, who are at once the genius and the strength of the Revolution. But the Reign of Terror has been established, and it is not yet to end.

Raoul de Maurepas has been for more than a year in hiding. Still sheltered faithfully by his self-chosen protector, suiting himself to the requirements of his hazardous position with ready adaptability, and working as a bona-fide assistant in the little shop. He might perhaps have tried to escape, and to have joined the insurgents in La Vendée, but that he has been occupied in trying fruit-

lessly, plot after plot, for the release of the Queen. From the 10th of August in last year he has given himself to that one object; as faithful a servant now, as when he mounted guard at Versailles in the happier days that are gone.

He failed in January, when the King was executed; he has failed over and over again, but failure only rouses afresh that indomitable spirit, only makes him more resolute and persevering. As long as the Queen remains a prisoner, so long will he devote all his energies to save her. He has never seen Gabrielle de Thouars all this time, though he has found means, two or three times, of communicating with her; but there is so much danger in all intercourse, that it is best that no one whose presence is not easily accounted for, should be seen entering Madame de Drou's house. It is true that of late he has had it in his mind to

attempt an interview, but for the last few weeks he has been stricken down by sore sickness; and now that he is tardily and painfully recovering, his protector brings him news that might go far to bring back his malady. The Queen, removed in August to the Conciergerie, subjected there to hideous indignities, is to be tried at last.

"It seems a pity, after all," says Dutollet, thoughtfully; "I do not believe that this poor Queen was ever as bad as they say—but what would you?"

"Tried to-morrow, you say," says De Maurepas, as he clenches his weak hands in impotent despair; "and there is *no* hope?"

"None—how can there be?" rejoins his host, who, however, in his rough way, tries to soothe his guest; but De Maurepas scarcely hears his well-meant remarks, for he is lost in thought. As the result of his medi-

tations, towards evening he announces his intention of going out. Naturally enough Dutollet objects, alleging his recent illness as a sufficient reason against the project. But Raoul de Maurepas is resolute, and going forth with somewhat feeble and uncertain steps, betakes himself to the Rue St Honoré. Before a certain house there, he stops, and, entering, makes his way to the third story, and into a small, bare room. Everything is meagre and sordid. The floor is strewn with scraps of leather, and there is little furniture besides the bench on which a man is seated, busily engaged in shoemaking, who lifts a haggard face to his visitor's. One can see that he is short-sighted, and that a suspicious expression comes over his face, as he evidently fails to recognize the new comer. It clears away, however, as the latter whispers a few words in his ear, and as he pushes back the cap he

wears, and shakes the grey hairs which surrounds it, one can still trace the tonsure.

Their conference is very short, and conducted in a low and cautious voice on both sides, and then De Maurepas says,

"You shall know the hour, mon père."

To which the other answers,

"I shall be here and ready, M. le Marquis," for he is none other than a nonjuring priest who is hidden here, and whose life would not be worth five minutes' purchase, if the fact were known to the Sectional Committee, but who, nevertheless, is the resort of several disguised Royalists, who yet linger in Paris.

The Marquis de Maurepas kneels for a second, as the priest gives him his blessing, and then goes forth again. This time he takes his way to the Conciergerie. No one notices him, the pale young workman, who turns into a wine-shop hard by; and then he

beckons to a boy hanging by the door, and asks if he will take a message. The lad's eyes brighten, for he is ragged and poor, and the prospect of some reward is welcome; he listens attentively to his lesson, nods and vanishes.

De Maurepas sits down in the dingy cabaret, and drinks thankfully, for he is weak still, the glass of thin wine for which he has called, listening absently at first to the clatter of voices going on round him. It is true, there are not many people present, but they are good, if squalid patriots; and their remarks are all on one theme.

"So, it is come at last," says one, of singularly unkempt appearance, whose dirty red cap is thrust on a mass of wild black locks; "it is well seen that we have waited a long time."

"And what for?" says another, of somewhat cleaner garb, swathed to the chin in a

voluminous cravat, and wearing an enormous cocked hat; "why should not the Austrian have been finished first? For my part, I always considered it a mistake that she should survive 'Veto.'"

"She is not yet tried, see you," remarks a third doubtfully; "and she has advocates—advocates—Chauveau-Lagarde and Tronson-Ducoudray, to speak for her—"

"What of that?" rejoins the first speaker, contemptuously; "is not the will of the People supreme? and do not they demand—*death?*"

"Eh," puts in the mistress of the cabaret, a pretty dark-eyed woman; "if I am to be baulked of the sight of the Veuve Capet in the tumbril, I will never go near the Sainte Guillotine again. It would be a disappointment the most cruel; "and she clasps her hands, and looks from one to the other of her customers, appealingly; then

reassured, laughs, nods, and resumes her knitting.

Perhaps it is just as well that no one looks at the young man, sitting by silent; for the blood rushes to the roots of his hair, and his hand instinctively moves to where his sword hangs no longer.

Is he dreaming? Can it be *she* of whom these base lips speak thus? She, whom he has served so loyally, whom he remembers, ah, so well, in her beauty and her power, she, the Queen of France? It may be that, though knowing her position he has never, till this moment, fully realised it; never understood that these grim walls yonder really enclosed Marie Antoinette, and that they will release her only for the scaffold.

A woman steps hastily in at the door, and, nodding to the proprietress, looks round till her glance falls on De Maurepas.

"Eh, Antoine," she says, "thou hast a message for me, is it not?"

"Yes, citoyenne," he answers, rising; "I am sorry to have given you this trouble."

"It is nothing—nothing. I thought Mère Rotrou would soon send. I can walk a little way with thee, and thou canst tell me," says the new comer readily, and they turn into the street, while De Maurepas pays his small Mercury, waiting there, from the very slender store still remaining to him, and which is rapidly vanishing.

"Now," says the woman, as they turn a corner which brings them into a narrow, deserted street; "what is it?—be brief."

"You understand the token?" he says hurriedly.

"Nothing less would have brought me, citoyen," she replies; "it does not answer for the concierge to be long out. But if it is to serve *her*—"

"It is to serve her. First, there is no hope—?"

"None. I am sure of it," her voice falters a little; "it is all foreseen. The trial will be to-morrow—the end next day."

He is white to his lips now, and puts one hand to the wall as if to steady himself.

"And they will, of course, allow her no confessor?"

"Ask yourself, citoyen. A constitutional priest, perhaps yes, but that she will not accept."

"No. Then tell her, and her only, that in No. 3 Rue S. Honoré, third storey, there will be a priest who has not forsworn himself, and who will give her the blessing of Holy Church as she passes. . . . . It is his life, remember; tell her only in the last extremity—if all fails."

"Trust me," she answers; "Thérèse Bault

has risked too much to fail now, and besides, I would do much for this poor Queen. Anything more?

"Only—only," he says, hesitatingly; "that I would die for her now, as I would have died once before. Perhaps she may remember a commission given in the King's Cabinet of the Tuileries. She said then that she trusted me."

His voice falters as he speaks these few broken words, his last loyal message. Madame Bault nods gravely, and then hurries back to the Conciergerie; while Raoul de Maurepas, unable for a time to tear himself from the fascination of those dreary walls, lingers some minutes yet to look bitterly and regretfully at the prison which yet holds the broken heart of the Queen of France.

What are her thoughts now? Are visions of old days, of splendour and glitter mocking

her low estate? or, sadder still, of hope and youth, so long, long withered?

He turns away at last, and makes his way slowly, weakened with many emotions, to his humble shelter.

CHAPTER XV.

ONCE MORE.

> Who knew not that I loved him even then
> When I was scornfullest, whom yet I love,
> Whom I love on for ever.

RAOUL DE MAUREPAS, tossing on his wakeful couch that night, thinking of past, present, and future, sick at heart of everything round him, decided at last to try and risk an interview with Gabrielle de Thouars the next day. The excitement which would attend the trial of the Queen would favour such an attempt, and with returning health, he felt his anxiety to see Gabrielle again had reached an overmastering pitch. He had never flagged in his loyalty to her, in spite of her caprices and vagaries, in spite of a year's separation. He

knew her, perhaps, better than she knew herself, and recognised the fidelity that she took such infinite pains to disguise.

He knew that she and her aunt were in safety, from the interest made for them by De Sabran, and that they lived in extreme retirement; but it occurred to him that it *might* be practicable for them to leave Paris, and that he might help them in the prosecution of this plan. The Queen dead, he might (if they were once away) escape himself, and throw in his lot with the Vendéans for the restoration of the young King. . . . Day broke on him, turning this plan over in his mind, and on consideration he determined to remain quiet until the evening, trusting to others for information on the progress of affairs. So he took his place in the shop, and weighed and measured and bandied words with the customers, as if he had never been a peer of France and a garde-du-corp. At last the

weary day wore by, and it was all over. The trial was completed, sentence pronounced, and he went out, taking the precaution to furnish himself with a basket of groceries. Arrived at the somewhat dingy abode, where, according to the recently enforced law, the names of the inhabitants were severally inscribed at the door, he gave his name as Raoul, and said he had brought home the goods which the citoyenne Drou had bought; it was possible the citoyenne might wish to see them. Babette who admitted him to her mistress's apartments, did not recognise him, but transmitted his message faithfully. Gabrielle, to whom the name suggested a sudden hope, gave orders that the messenger should walk in; and so the two, parted under such strange circumstances, met again.

Madame de Drou sat by the hearth, for it was damp and chilly, and her rapidly increasing infirmities made her feel the cold severely.

She was much changed within this last year, and seemed to have grown suddenly very old. The truth was, that a month or two back, she had had a stroke of paralysis, and her lower limbs were helpless now. She carried her stately head erect still, toupée, lace and all, with the old dignity; but—it was a piteous change. The beauty which, until lately, had been so well-preserved was all faded now; only a dim light in the dark eyes, the delicate chiselling of the features, remained to tell of that vanished glory.

Gabrielle was little altered. At her age people do not change in a year. She was graver certainly, which was natural, and looked more thoughtful; but it was her own sweeping curtsy which responded to the elaborate bow, bestowed by the grocer on the two ladies.

"It is M. de Maurepas, Madame," she whispered to her aunt, during this performance.

Madame did not immediately comprehend, but when she did recognise her visitor, she did not display any remarkable satisfaction.

"M. le Marquis, you are welcome," she said, somewhat frigidly, "all the more for your long absence," for Madame, obstinate and unreasonable when she chooses, can never be brought to understand fully the danger which attends any communication between Royalists.

"It has been involuntary on my part, Madame," he answered. "First, I have been and am in danger of discovery; and secondly, I have been suffering from illness."

"And you are ill now," said Gabrielle, quickly. "Sit down, Monsieur, and rest."

He sank into a chair with a sigh of relief, while she eyed him furtively. The languor of recent sickness had taken the place of the old acquired languor of manner, and the handsome refined face was pinched and

sharpened; but in spite of his carefully chosen disguise, she trembled to see how little it could conceal the ineffaceable stamp of grace and breeding belonging to the courtier, the noble of twenty descents. She would have known him anywhere, she thought, and why not others? However, his disguise must have been more complete than she thought, seeing it had served him now for many months.

Madame de Drou was the first to speak. Her ideas and prepossessions never lasted long now, and already she had forgotten her cool reception of her visitor.

"Is the terrible rumour true that we have heard to-day, Monsieur," she said, "of the Queen's trial, of—?"

"It is true, Madame," he answered in an unsteady voice.

"I never thought it would come to this," she went on, clasping her trembling hands,

while the tears of weakness and age rolled slowly down her face. "It is well seen how they murdered that blessed saint, the King, but I did not think they would have laid hands on *her*."

Gabrielle knelt down by her, and laid her own soft hands on the aged ones; but her eyes, too, were full as she turned them on De Maurepas.

"And there is no one—no one to help or save her?" she said, with quivering lips.

It seemed to him that there was an implied reproach, and he answered a little proudly,

"Mademoiselle will do me the honour to believe that I would have given my life for her Majesty's if possible. But," he added, "time is growing short, I ought not to linger here. I cannot serve the young King in Paris, but I may elsewhere. Is it from choice that you remain, Madame? Surely you were better away in face of the events

which I foresee; and if I might offer my help and escort—I have some right—"

"You *had*, M. le Marquis," said the old lady, very stiffly, recollecting herself. "It is for you to decide how far you have upheld that right of late."

His pale face flushed, and he looked quickly at Gabrielle, but her eyes were bent on the floor. He showed no impatience at having to renew his excuses.

"Public events have so much power even over an obscure person like myself," he said, with something of his old lazy *insouciance*, "that they have absolutely incapacitated me from attending on Madame as often as I could wish. But as to your departure?"

"I will not leave Paris," said Madame, obstinately. "I do not believe that we are in any danger here, and Monsieur can see how helpless I have become. Besides, M. de Sabran, although his ordinary proceedings

and views are horrible," she added perversely, "behaves very well, and remembers the hospitality I have extended to him."

"I hate to be indebted to him," said Gabrielle, looking up suddenly; "let us go, if it is still possible."

"You speak like a foolish child," said her aunt, as Raoul de Maurepas, seeing that she was impracticable, got up.

"Madame has only to command me," he said, with a graceful bow, "I am at her orders. In two days I will come again, or send—"

Gabrielle crossed over quickly, and laying her hand on his arm, drew him further from her auut.

"M. le Marquis," she said, hurriedly, "I beseech you help us to go. The aunt will not believe the danger, and—and I would rather die than accept safety at *his* hands."

His face brightened.

"Mademoiselle, my life is, as ever, at your disposal, but we must concert the means. I will not conceal that there is great difficulty, but within two days you shall know."

"You cannot come again?" she said, wistfully.

"Not again, I think. It would not be safe, even in this elegant toilette. Nevertheless, Mademoiselle, au revoir. I hope to appoint a place of meeting, where I may have the honour of attending you and Madame your aunt."

It was the old indolent yet deferential manner that used to provoke her so; now it brought the tears, hot and smarting, to her eyes, and a longing regret to her heart.

"One moment," she faltered, her pride breaking down under the pressure of that remorseful pain. "Oh, forgive me—I never understood—and now—"

The fair tremulous hands went up to hide

the drooping face, and she never saw how white he grew.

"I have nothing to forgive," he said, quietly. "Mademoiselle knows what I once hoped—what I would still hope. . . . I must go now. . . . Gabrielle, I may kiss your hand once again . . . ?"

He took it very quietly in his own, and looked for a moment fixedly in her face, while an expression of keen suffering crossed his own at the sight of her tears. She had never softened so before, never looked so little like the imperious, capricious Gabrielle of old; never, ah, never was so dear. . . .

"Adieu, Gabrielle," he said, softly, and so went away.

She hurried to her room, and throwing herself down on the ground, wept even as she had once wept before after a parting; but it was not like this, not like this.

"I must see him again, I must," she

gasped. "We will leave this place of horror, and together, and then I can tell him again that I am sorry, my own."

When she had dried her eyes and gone back to her aunt, she found Madame de Drou inclined, on reflection, to dilate on that latterly abandoned theme, the perfections of her late visitor, and her niece, in her softened condition of heart, was not inclined to dispute her opinion.

"When all these matters have arranged themselves," said Madame, airily, "we will celebrate the wedding. It has been deferred long enough. But attend, Gabrielle, on one point I am resolved; M. le Marquis is young, and does not know what he talks of, on some subjects; leave Paris I will not."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE QUEEN OF SORROW.

> Aye, turn not aside, though now
> She is passing forth with her mournful train
> The journey she shall not return again. . . .
> Nay, rather, she passeth from death to life,
> To a region of peace from a land of strife.

It is the morning of the 15th of October, the day on which France is to see her Queen go forth to die. Sombre, grey, dreary, the chill autumn fog broods over the guilty city, as if it would cast a veil over the tragedy which is to be consummated, and not till late do a few pale rays of light break through the dull mantle of mist.

She has been stirring early, has written that last pathetic letter to Madame Elisabeth, and now there is nothing left that she can do but wait for the end. Steadily she has

refused the aid of the three constitutional priests sent to her; but there remains to her one gleam of comfort, transmitted by a loyal heart yet watching. . . .

Raoul de Maurepas intends to pay his last duty to the Queen to-day. He has failed to save her; he will at least see her once again.

"You go out too often, citoyen," says Dutollet, shaking his head. "Believe me, it is not safe."

"I am very cautious, good friend," says his guest, "after to-day I will keep as close as you please." . . .

There is a great crowd abroad to-day, all converging towards one point, the Place de la Revolution. The guillotine has not yet become so monotonous as it soon will be, when it mows down daily such scores, that the passers-by will scarcely turn their heads as the tumbrils pass. As yet, it is some excite-

ment, and then there has been no such victim as to-day since the lovely Corday went by in her blood-red garb, the fire of enthusiasm shining in her eyes, and flushing her fair face. The roofs and trees, the windows and parapets, teem with eager faces, and the hum of expectation swells and rises as the time draws nigh. Raoul de Maurepas, as he mingles in that seething mass, white and sick with horror at the mere anticipation, looks in vain for anything like compassion in the faces round him, such as had been certainly visible at the King's execution. True, any manifestation that may be construed into an exhibition of pity is dangerous, and people have learnt to school their faces by this time; but, for the most part, there prevails a perfectly unaffected expression of pleased, lively interest. How he longs, with a fierce, mad longing, to crush out that, and every other expression at one blow. How he clenches his unarmed

hands in an agony of impotence, as it is forced upon him that he is utterly powerless now. . . . It is past eleven o'clock. A hoarse murmur in the distance draws nearer, swells into a roar, the throng sways and presses forward. . . . She is coming. Is this the last indignity? The King was taken to his death with some slight show of decency in a coach, but France can only give her Queen this, the rough cart that plies between the prisons and the scaffold, the ordinary tumbril of the criminal. Perhaps, too, it is no small drop in her cup of agony that, with her bound hands she cannot, as the cart jolts on, maintain the upright and lofty carriage with which she would fain face her people for the last time. The crowd sees this, and appreciates it as an excellent joke; the *insulteuses* wheel round the tumbril with streaming hair, in the mazes of the Carmagnole. "Ah," they cry, "these are not your cushions of Trianon."

"Madame is not accustomed to drive in the carriage of the nation," shriek others.

"It will be all the same when she gets to la Sainte Guillotine."

Raoul de Maurepas, waiting in the Rue S. Honoré, nerving himself for that most pitiful sight, has not seen her for fourteen months, and his heart tightens even at this supreme moment to note the change that one short year has wrought. Can she be the same peerless Queen whom he remembers, not so long ago, the centre of all that was brilliant, the sun among many stars? This faded, haggard woman, her grey hair, needing no touch of powder, gathered back from her furrowed face, her white dress rent and tattered, her bare, wasted arms bound with cords? If life has brought her suffering that can leave such terribly visible traces, it must indeed be well for her to lay it down. Yet, as she comes nearer, he can see in the dauntless

gaze of those imperial eyes, hollowed as they are, and in the iron composure of that resolute mouth, the daughter of Maria Theresa still. He is quite close as she passes. The Queen's eyes, looking steadily round her, meet his; she makes no movement, no sign, but he *knows* that his last faithful service is remembered, that Marie Antoinette recognises her loyal servant, and thanks him. He is quite sure of it when, a few paces further on, he sees the Queen give a rapid, comprehensive glance at the upper windows of a house she passes, and then, with closed eyes, bow her stately head, while the poor bound hands essay to make the sign of the cross.

The crowd closes in, and follows that dismal cortège, but Raoul de Maurepas makes no effort to accompany it. He has seen the Queen once more, and he knows that his mission of comfort was not in vain. That is sufficient for him. He is dimly conscious of

the waving from window and balcony of many tricoloured banners, of the frenzied cries of "Down with the Austrian," but he has no heart to see the last ghastly act played out, so he goes home, giddy with horror, to try and collect his thoughts for his own immediate future, and for hers who is dearest to him.

The day after the Queen's execution, Léon de Sabran presents himself at Madame de Drou's. His visits are sufficiently rare, for though he keeps a watchful eye over the safety of that lady and her niece, he knows better than to obtrude his presence too often. He is content to establish every claim to their gratitude, as, indeed, he has done, before he asks for anything further. At last, however, he has come to the conclusion that he has served long enough to prefer his claims, and he believes that he has a powerful friend at court in the unavowed, but easily conjectured,

preference of Mdlle. de Thouars herself. True, there was that old contract with De Maurepas, but she has never shown any disposition to be bound by it, and nothing has been heard of him since the King's death. De Sabran failed to discover him then, and has since allowed the search to drop. No doubt he has escaped to Coblenz, or to the demented peasants in La Vendée. At any rate, he, De Sabran, has a fair field now, and Mademoiselle has always been perfectly gracious. Doubtless she will feel the Queen's death acutely, but it will give her a sense of the instability of her own position, and incline her all the more to listen to him, the only person who can or will assure her safety. With these encouraging reflections, he is ushered into Madame de Drou's little salon.

She is sitting in her accustomed place now, by the fire-place. She is asleep, exhausted by the terrible emotions of yesterday,

and the handsome old face, as it reposes against the cushions of her chair, displays a solemn, almost monumental placidity. She is breathing softly and regularly, and Gabrielle sits motionless by her side, wrapped in thought. She rises as De Sabran comes in, and moves forward; very pale, with traces of tears on her face, and a lingering expression of painful reflection. All the better for his purpose, he thinks.

"It is some time since I had the honour of seeing Mademoiselle," he begins, in a low voice, by no means desirous of breaking the slumbers of Madame, "but my time is greatly occupied."

"One can scarcely note the time, when it is marked by such horrors," she answers, recklessly, in the same subdued tone.

"Mademoiselle alludes to the event of yesterday. No one can deplore it more than I, and I would have used every effort to avert

it, but that was impossible." There is nothing like lying freely, he reflects, when you are once about it.

"And yet Monsieur has cast in his lot with these infamous wretches," she says, lifting her heavy eyes to his face. It is very bold to speak so to a deputy, but he is not disposed to quarrel with her to-day; and he is quite unconscious of the spring of hope which has unloosed her tongue, and which is nestling at her heart.

He shrugs his shoulders.

"Who could foresee all that has happened?" he says. "I implore Mademoiselle to believe in the purity of my intentions. France needed regeneration."

"Surely she did not need this baptism of royal blood," she says bitterly; but he has not come here to argue those questions with her. He draws his chair a little nearer.

"Mademoiselle must find her position a distressing one," he begins again.

"Life is not as agreeable as it was," she answers, coldly. "One does not amuse oneself now, it is true."

"And Madame your aunt's health is precarious," he goes on, with increasing significance of tone.

She lifts her head, and looks full in his face.

"Well, Monsieur," she says, "to what does this tend?"

"That is a very easy question to solve," he says, rapidly. "Mademoiselle cannot but be aware of my long and patient devotion. Lately I have been so fortunate as to find means of proving it. Will she not, at last, consent to crown it?"

The blood rushes in an indignant flood over Gabrielle's pale face. If he had ever any chance, he has given the death-blow to it, by this allusion to the obligation under

which she already frets, as beneath an insupportable weight.

"I am answered; is it not so, Gabrielle?" he whispers, as he tries to take her hand, mistaking the cause of her visible emotion, but she shrinks back, and clasps her hands tightly on her knee. She is trying to collect her thoughts. She knows that she regards this man, at the present moment, at least, with something like detestation; and then she glances at her aunt's still face, looking old, so old, in her sleep. Are they not, more or less, in De Sabran's power? And how can she sacrifice Madame de Drou, yes, and herself, for love of life is very strong, when, by a word, she might purchase safety for both? And yet, and yet—"I have nothing to forgive," "Adieu, Gabrielle." Why will those last words ring so persistently in her ears? Why can she not shut out all recollection of their speaker? No, it is no use, her heart is too

strong for her. She has not been true, so far, she has been miserably capricious, but she will be true now to Raoul de Maurepas. Still, for all their sakes, she must temporize. De Sabran, closely watching her face, cannot understand the war of emotion that manifests itself, and as it is contrary to his principles to see a mystery without seeking its explanation, he sets his brains to work to elucidate this one, as he listens to her reply. It comes very falteringly.

"Monsieur takes me by surprise," she says; "this is so unexpected—"

"Hardly, I think, Mademoiselle," he replies. "I have never attempted to conceal my sentiments."

She lifts again her lovely eyes.

"If Monsieur will give me time," she pleads.

A solution has occurred to him.

"Perhaps Mademoiselle is thinking of her

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previous contract," he says, beginning to lose his temper, and he sees that she grows white as death. He draws his own conclusion.

"I will answer Monsieur in a few days—a week," says Gabrielle in desperation, looking miserably round her.

He recovers all his easy gallantry of manner.

"Mademoiselle is resolved to put my constancy to the utmost proof," he says, "but I accept the test. Adieu. Accept my condolences on the condition of Madame. It must cause the liveliest anxiety."

"A week," says Gabrielle to herself, as her unwelcome suitor walks down the stairs; "by that time we shall be safe away, la tante and all. Ah, Raoul, Raoul, I have been wrong and false, but you shall try me now!"

Once relieved of De Sabran's presence and importunities, and her spirits rise. Hope

again asserts itself, being at no time far distant from a buoyant nature like Gabrielle's. She sits, as the gloomy evening darkens in, quietly by her aunt's side, weaving pleasant fancies for the future. Yes, all would be well; they would escape into Bretagne, and thence to England; they would be at peace, and by and bye, when all this dream of horror was past, they would come back again, and the old days would return, only far, far happier. She would be Madame la Marquise de Maurepas then, the beautiful Marquise, but she would only care if *he* was proud of her. . . .

Léon de Sabran, on his part, is not as well satisfied as Mdlle. de Thouars imagines him to be. He studied the varied expressions on her face just now so assiduously to some purpose. He is sure now that her heart is more concerned in her contract with De Maurepas than he has hitherto supposed,

and this is to him an unexpected and proportionately disagreeable conclusion.

"If I had not been a fool," he thinks, "I should have secured him long ago. It shows that one should never throw away a chance. No doubt he is far enough away, but it seems that merely absence does not lessen her affection for him. I ought to have sent him to the Grève last winter."

It is a cheerless, drizzling evening, and he walks hurriedly on to reach shelter. There are many people abroad, notwithstanding the weather, some on business, some on pleasure, for the working of the Sainte Guillotine does not prevent people from enjoying themselves. The tumbrils may fill by day, but so do the theatres by night. De Sabran, however, is bound for his own apartments, and just as he reaches the house door he stumbles against another person, advancing from the opposite direction, a man in the ordinary garb of a

small tradesman, though, for that matter, every one dresses plainly now. De Sabran stops, apologizes, and is about to enter, when the oil-lamp from within throws its light full on the stranger's face for a moment. De Sabran starts very slightly, and waits until the man has gone on a few steps, then he closes the door and follows. Up one street and down another, but never losing sight of the chase, nor increasing his distance. Finally he watches the retreating figure into a small house, which he carefully notes before he turns away.

The Marquis de Maurepas is reasonably contented with his day's work, as he enters his homely lodging this evening. He has been actively, though very cautiously, employed in making every inquiry and investigation which can conduce to his flight from Paris, in the society of Madame de Drou and her niece, and he believes that he sees at last a

possibility of success. No more. It is no easy task that he has set himself. It may prove a matter of life and death, and the odds in favour of the latter; but then neither his life nor theirs can be considered in safety as things are. Any day it may seem good to De Sabran to denounce them, whatever his motives may have been in preserving them so far. Raoul de Maurepas therefore, sitting down at Dutollet's supper-table, and reckoning up his chances, is not without hope that he may be able to redeem his promise to Gabrielle de Thouars to the letter. Yes, he has a little—a very little—money left, and he has the interest of his devoted host. Dutollet is not a garrulous person, and he notices that his guest is unusually thoughtful and taciturn, so he lets him alone, and discusses his own meal in silence. It is nearly finished when there comes a loud and impatient knocking at the door.

"You had better go to your room, citoyen," says Dutollet, with an uneasy foreboding in his mind, as he rises to admit the visitors.

True, De Maurepas has escaped for a long time, but that proves nothing. Anxiety is amply justified. Scarcely has Raoul reached his room when the door is burst open, and two men wearing red caps, their swords drawn in their hands, precipitate themselves into the room, while he catches sight of two more outside. The foremost intruder lays a hand on his shoulder.

"Raoul, ci-devant Marquis de Maurepas, you are arrested in the name of the Republic, one and indivisible."

"So I should suppose, from your proceedings," says the prisoner, summoning all his courage to his aid, and concealing, under a perfectly calm exterior, the severity of this blow, falling at such a moment.

Without another word he accompanies his

captors to the kitchen, where poor Dutollet stands, anger and piteous regret on his face. A flash of remorse and commiseration crosses that of De Maurepas as their eyes meet.

"Take notice, citoyens," he says earnestly, "that this person is not implicated with me in any plots. He is as good a patriot as yourselves, and knows nothing of me or my doings. I swear it," and as he passes he manages to thrust his purse, with all that remains to him, into Dutollet's unwilling hand.

"Yes, yes, we will see to him—the nation is always just," answers one of the four, with an exceedingly dubious expression, and with this De Maurepas is forced to be content; but another thought strikes him, and he pauses on the threshold.

"It is a mere matter of curiosity, my good citoyens," he says politely, "but I should like to know, first, why I am arrested, and,

secondly, how you knew where to find me?"

"It does not signify much," replies the last speaker, "and no doubt you will know all in good time; but this I can tell you, citoyen, you are denounced to the Section Committee by the citoyen Sabran, who was acquainted with your place of concealment."

CHAPTER XVII.

UNTO THE LAST.

"He was a very perfect gentle knight."

Stone walls doe not a prison make,
  Nor iron barres a cage,
Minds innocent and quiet take
  That for an hermitage.

THE Marquis de Maurepas, consigned to the prison of the Abbaye on his arrest, feels few misgivings as to his subsequent fate, for he knows too well what it will surely be. By the care and loyal devotion of Dutollet, and the connivance of a jailer at the prison, he is supplied with such clothes as enable him to reassume the outward seeming of a gentleman, but he cannot, and this is his hardest trial, send even a message to Gabrielle

to tell her why he fails to keep tryste. His suggestions meet with absolute denial, and he soon perceives that a message from a prisoner might be unsafe for her to receive. Well, there is nothing for it but to wait now, with whatever patience he can summon, and accept the inevitable end which is advancing sooner or later.

De Maurepas found himself, on his incarceration in the Abbaye, in the centre of a society of once well-known friends, so many indeed that it might almost seem a grim reproduction of Versailles. Rohans, Noailles, Montmorencis ; courtiers, soldiers ; ladies, young and old, were assembled there, and were permitted to spend much of their time together. It was, perhaps, one of the strangest signs of that unhinged time that the prisoners occupied themselves with such composure in various employments, treating the future as entirely a matter of course. The women plied

their needlework and embroidery, the men read or played at cards. It might almost have seemed the apathy of despair which produced this apparent callousness, but for the real heroism which each individual manifested to the very last—nothing ever shook their brave tranquillity.

For some days after De Maurepas' arrest nothing important occurred, as far as the captives were concerned. The trial and deaths of the twenty-three Girondists absorbed the Convention, but after that feast of death on the 1st November, the Committee of Public Safety turned their minds to the captive Royalists, with whom the prisons overflowed, to be dealt with as the less dangerous enemy of the two.

There was a certain system pursued, though a very simple one. Every evening a jailer presented himself in the large room where the prisoners were assembled, and

read a list of names from a paper in his hand. The next day, those mentioned would go forth to their examination, and return—condemned. But, courtier or priest, man or woman, each accepted his or her fate, with the same strange composure, and mounted the tumbrils for the Place de la Revolution, as if they were on their way to some ordinary destination.

De Maurepas, for a time, was haunted by one fear, namely, that every day a new victim might be added in the person of Gabrielle de Thouars; but she never came, and his apprehensions were partially set at rest, by a lady there, Madame de Brancas, an old friend of Madame de Drou, who daily assembled quite a little court round her, a dismal travesty of her well-filled salon in happier times.

"M. le Marquis need be under no apprehension," said she, cheerfully, knitting while

she talked. "I, as you are aware, know Mdlle. de Thouars and Madame her aunt intimately, and I am confident they are safe. M. de Sabran (he has, I understand, dropped the prefix) is entirely devoted to Mademoiselle, and he, you see, is a deputy, a Montagnard. He will look after her."

"Madame makes me profoundly happy by this opinion," said Raoul, with perfect sincerity.

Madame laughed a low soft laugh, for which she had been famous in other days, when her beauty, and her wit besides, had challenged admiration.

"Apparently, Monsieur's generosity has survived his sentiments of jealousy," she said. "M. de Sabran was a rival of yours, I thought."

"I am not likely to be again in a position to guard Mademoiselle's safety, myself," he answered, gravely, "therefore, I am grateful

to any one, be he who he may, who is more fortunate."

"You are a disinterested knight as well as a devoted one," she rejoined, still smiling; "figure to yourself M. de Sabran in the same position, would *he* be equally grateful?"

"That cannot change my sentiments, Madame."

"Eh," said the lady, shrugging her shoulders," for my part, I—what is that, M. le Vicomte, my name, did you say?" for the jailer had by this time arrived on his nightly errand, and was reading his ominous list. "Since that is the case, I very much fear, Messieurs, that I shall not have the pleasure of assembling our little society again," rolling up her knitting as she spoke, placidly.

In effect, the next day Madame de Brancas confronted the Tribunal, received her sen-

tence with a magnificent curtsy, and returned, in company with the other condemned, to her fellow-captives in the Abbaye, informing them of the fact with perfect composure.

It was not until some days had passed after her execution that Raoul de Maurepas heard his own name read. He had no need then to seek for courage. This hour had been too long expected, almost realised; he had faced danger too often, for that; and as he accompanied his guards before the Tribunal, he was conscious, chiefly, of a feverish desire to get it over and done with. The spirit, half of the noble, half of the soldier, was too instinctive to need any effort to face Fouquier Tinville with calm disdain; and his old graceful indolence was never more apparent, than when he answered the few interrogatories put to him. The accusations were overwhelming. He was a noble, had

been in the body-guard, had been in arms against the People in '89, and on the 10th of August '92; had been in close attendance on Louis Capet on that day at the National Assembly, had endeavoured to instigate a rescue at the said Louis' execution, and finally, in October last, had been detected, in disguise, communicating with the Widow Capet on the eve of her death. At a period, when to grieve at the success of the Republic, was to be guilty of death, no less than to hold any communication with an exile, the least of these crimes was fatal. He elevated his eyebrows at each count of the indictment, and at the end bowed conclusively.

"It is all perfectly correct, Messieurs, excuse me, I should say, citoyens. May I be permitted to observe that these questions are unnecessary, and a little wearisome?" he remarked, arranging his ruffles; then his sentence was

pronounced, and he was removed to make way for the next.

Léon de Sabran, although he had furnished other witnesses to support the accusation, from some unexplained repugnance, being unwilling to assume that rôle himself, was nevertheless present. He never took his eyes off this one prisoner, the captive, as it were, of his own bow and spear. How he hated him, and yet he could have envied him even then. The old, cool insolence, none the less biting because non-aggressive, the same here as long ago, well—at least those lips would not long wear that contemptuous smile. . . . And yet that forlorn prisoner stood there with an untarnished shield, an unspotted honour; while *he*, what had he done with the honour of the De Sabrans? Tush, it was worse than useless to think of those things now. He had been, he was, a good patriot, that should console him for

having dragged through the mud that obsolete fiction, the honour of his house. Those ideas were over-past now, over and gone for ever, and it was better to forget them.

As the Marquis de Maurepas passed out, his eyes met those of De Sabran, and he smiled slightly with a half-weary contempt. He felt little anger against him now, or emotion of any kind, save of a passive wonder, as at a noble who had betrayed his order. But he had saved Gabrielle de Thouars, and that mattered most, after all. It had scarcely been a fair fight between them, but De Sabran had the sun on his side of the wall now. So he passed out, and De Sabran turned away with bitter jealousy, and a pang of something like remorse gnawing at his heart. *He* felt as if his rival might be too strong for him even yet. What if he failed to win Gabrielle? What if she came to know the part he had played? Would he not

have soiled his hands with treason, for nothing?

De Maurepas goes back with his doomed companions for their last night on earth. Each, as he enters the common prison, draws his hand across his throat, the usual mute sign of the coming fate. No one makes any remark, no one alludes to the morrow ever in this place, for all know that for some now present there will be no to-morrow. There are two priests among the captives, but confession is impossible, for when once locked in their cells for the night each is alone; but in the morning those two will give hasty absolution to the victims as they depart. The usual "distractions" go on—the games of cards, the talking. There is a girl in a white dress yonder sitting by her mother, her fingers busy at some embroidery; she looks up as some one speaks to her, and smiles slightly. She has dark eyes too. . . . De

Maurepas sits down by an old general, his breast covered with decorations, who fought at Minden, but who, nevertheless, finds his past services for France useless to save him now. He is usually taciturn, and the younger man can think his own thoughts undisturbed. So the end has come at last, and to-morrow he is to die. A little while ago he had a wild, faint hope—but a hope still—of escaping from this City of the Plague, and saving Gabrielle too, and finding a refuge far off in Bretagne, he and she together. . . . Hush, it will not do to think of that now. Well, perhaps she may come out of this awful chaos safe after all. If he could but make sure of that he could die contented; and at last, on the other side, he may find her again, and they two will vex their souls no longer with all this weary strife. . . . He is not all frivolous, you see, this marquis of the old regime. His thoughts on this night are far

less of himself than of the woman he has long loved, and yet of whom he is by no means sure that she cares two straws about him after all. How the dark eyes of that young demoiselle opposite remind him of *hers*. . . . Let us think of something else. Poor Dutollet—so faithful, so true. Surely he will not suffer for that loyal shelter. It is hard that some things are hidden from us. De Maurepas does not know that Dutollet will weather the tempest, in spite of the risk he has run in sheltering an emigré, that he will often speak faithfully and sadly of the seigneur he tried to save, when these terrible times are past, and he himself is grey and bent. The thought of that tender heart, hidden under so rough an exterior, brings back recollections of the old boyish days in Auvergne. Of the tall mountain peaks, the deep forest glades, the green woodlands that he will never see

again. It is long since he has seen them, long since he has thought much about them, yet somehow the remembrance comes back strong upon him now. Memories of early dreams of wrongs redressed when he should have the power to do so, return and face him. Dreams long forgotten, never fulfilled. Yes, he has lived an idle, useless, butterfly life until forced into action; but at least he knows how to die. . . . The night goes on and comes to an end at last, and morning breaks. Outside it is bright, clear, and sunny, though cold with the first frost of winter, and the light penetrates even into that sad prison room.

Raoul de Maurepas attires himself with all his careful precision, and strange recollections of the gorgeous costumes, the gold lace and embroidery of other days. Nevertheless when he comes forth, though it is to mount a rough cart with a dozen other victims of

different grades, he looks every inch a noble —a knight of Saint Louis, a marquis with a patent of Charles IX. As he passes through the large room, he kneels down for a moment before one of the captive priests and receives a last absolution; near by the girl with the dark eyes is sitting, and with a sudden impulse he stoops and kisses her hand.

The tumbrils fare slowly enough on their way, each with its load. A strange and motley fellowship, never before conjoined, and now brought together for this dark journey. Old and young men, nobles and artisans, ladies of blood and working girls; Raoul de Maurepas, cool and proud, looking round him, as he brushes a speck of dust from his sleeve, with lofty disdain on the "canaille." Ah, what a crowd there is in the Place de la Révolution, and how the *tricoteuses* crowd round the scaffold, their rows of chairs arranged to secure the best possible

point of observation. A ring of *insulteuses* and drunken patriots dance the hideous mazes of the Carmagnole as the tumbrils advance. There is Philippine Drouet heading a band of furies, her dark hair streaming, her eyes aflame with terrible joy. . . . For a moment his bound hands clench. The chivalrous spirit of a long line of ancestors asserts itself: the spirit that splintered lances at Mont-l'héry, and charged at Rocroi, and faced death gallantly at Malplaquet, flares up even now. It seems hard—hard to die so—he, the best blade in the body-guard. If his hands were but free one moment, and could close over his sword-hilt once more, and those lost and vanished friends were round him again, they could scatter this miserable crew like chaff. Better to have fallen, sword in hand, on the staircase at Versailles, in the ante-room at the Tuileries. . . . A gleam of sunshine breaks from a

passing cloud, cold and clear. It glitters on the bayonets round the scaffold, on roof and beam and spire. It falls lovingly on the golden hair of a little child in its mother's arms, close, for the moment, to the cart, and on a little cross hung round the baby's neck. The woman is from the country doubtless, and no one has noticed this unwonted adornment; but the Marquis de Maurepas sees it. He looks long and earnestly, and his turn comes at last. . . . There is nothing but a quiet composure on his face now. "Adieu, Gabrielle," he says softly to himself, and so passes up to his death.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BITTER END.

"Death" and "Farewell," the last words on his lips,
And in her ears, Oh, how they rose and fell
Alternate like a cadence of despair.

"Weep for her, who drew him to his doom."

THE winter sets in bleak and bitter, the snow threatens and broods for days before the white plumes come floating down, but at times the sun breaks through the purple clouds, and sends a few rays to warm the chill air. The days go by heavily, laggingly, for all they are so short, and Gabrielle de Thouars receives no message—no sign. A week elapses. Can he have forgotten? Is he arrested? Is he—can he be dead? She wonders and racks her brain, and feels as if her last plank had floated away from her,

and left her alone on a measureless waste of waters.

Ah, how maddening it is, pent up in that dreary house, waiting for the signal which never comes. There in her old place Madame de Drou sits helpless, dreaming away the time, each day less and less concerned about passing events, and living more completely in the past: and Raoul de Maurepas has failed. This is the thought present to Gabrielle's mind, with an anguish of disappointment that shows how complete has been her trust that he would redeem his promise. What will come of it? Must it be her fate after all to turn to De Sabran? Surely—surely there is nothing else for it, nothing between that and death for herself and for her aunt too.

As the week expires she watches for his appearance in a fever of apprehension, that is only prolonged as another and yet another

day goes over her head without tidings of him.

Léon de Sabran has by no means forgotten the date, but he defers his visit of set purpose. He knows that he has his rival on the hip now, but he means to wait until the knife has actually descended before he claims Mademoiselle's reply. She will then have no one to turn to, and he argues that her utter friendlessness will dispose her the more readily to turn to him. Yes, he can very well afford to wait, and there is no lack of occupation. He has to assist at the trial of the twenty-three Girondists. He sees Valazé fall by his own hand at the moment of condemnation; he watches that strange band reach the place of their execution, accompanied by the dead body which is to share their fate; he hears them there sing their death-song, the Marseillaise, until Vergniaud's voice alone sings the last verse, before it sinks

into eternal silence; and he knows that by the strange retributive irony of fate, they find their one grave by the side of the slaughtered King whom they had laid there. There is, besides, to be disposed of, Egalité, once, and not so long ago, the idol of the fickle people which immolates him; so, altogether, the deputy Sabran does not find the time hang heavy on his hands. It is not till nearly a month after the Queen's execution that he once more presents himself at Madame de Drou's. Gabrielle comes alone to meet him, and he is not surprised to find that she looks worn and ill, though he knows nothing of the alternate hope and despondency that has racked her of late; but it strikes him partly with dismay, partly with fresh hope, to hear that her aunt is much worse. Two days ago only, Madame had another stroke, and she now lies still and unconscious, never to rise up in this world any more. Gabrielle is

at her bedside, when Babette creeps in to say that the Citoyen Sabran has come, but the tension has been so severe, that the visit so long dreaded is welcomed at last almost as a relief. De Sabran is standing in the middle of the room, when the door softly uncloses, and Mademoiselle de Thouars comes out. The heavy eyes and flagging steps with which she advances to meet him, smite him with a pang almost of compunction. He is utterly unscrupulous; he has placed himself and his own interests always as the chief end to be followed; but there is one enduring sentiment in his nature. He loves Gabrielle very dearly, in his own way; nay, he would almost be content to die for her love, but then—he would kill her first, that she might be all his own, that he might know that no one else could ever win her and wear her. He is sorry for her now, but he never wavers in his purpose.

"Mademoiselle," he says, bowing profoundly, "the week has long expired—the term of my probation—and I am here for your reply."

She clasps her dry hot hands together; a faint red steals over the dead whiteness of her face, as she lifts her dark imploring eyes to his.

"Madame my aunt is very ill," she replies. "I can give you none now."

"But," he persists, "in case of a fatal termination to Madame's illness—"

He is making sure too fast; she raises her head stiffly.

"Well, M. de Sabran?"

"You will be alone here, and friendless. Gabrielle," his voice softens, and he speaks with real passion, "I have much power and reputation as a patriot and Montagnard. The Gironde has fallen, we can do everything now. . . . Your prejudices shall be

respected, I promise. I will find a nonjuring priest even, if you object to the civil marriage—"

It is too much; prudence, fear are forgotten. All the old pride flames up in her face as she answers,

"Enough, Monsieur, let us have done with deceptions for ever. I have been betrothed from my childhood to M. the Marquis de Maurepas."

He looks fixedly at her, while a strange sinister smile steals over his face.

"I have often heard of this before—from others. But I would suggest that Mademoiselle's manner to *me*, at least, would scarcely have implied that she always respected the contract."

He might be gratified, he probably would be, if he understood it, at the look of painful remorse that comes into her eyes.

"If I have misled you, Monsieur," she

says, steadily, "I regret it; but the matter is as I have said."

"Then nothing can loosen that bond—but death?" he says, slowly, the same repellent look upon his face. She looks sharply at him, and turns white, though she could not tell why if she were asked; but her lips falter,

"Nothing."

"And if that severance has already come?"

Are those the words she hears, or are they the echo from some disjointed thoughts within her mind? She cannot move her eyes from his face, but her hands go up to push back the heavy masses of her hair with a piteous bewildered gesture.

"I do not believe it," she gasps.

"Then ask others—ask of the Committee of Public Safety," his voice is terribly distinct, though he never raises it. "I swear to you, by all you hold most sacred, that

Raoul, called Marquis de Maurepas, died under the guillotine to-day."

She does not faint, or even burst out crying, though her white lips move.

"It is not true—it is not true," she whispers, as if to herself. The blank misery of that tone only stings him. He forgets his plans and his caution, and grasps her hand.

"Do you think," he says, in the same low stern voice, "that I would suffer any obstacle to stand in my path that I could remove? That I would not clear away everything that was a barrier between us? It is not for nothing that I am placed where I am, and if I have power I use it. If there had been ten such as he I would have sent them all to the Place de la Révolution."

There comes over her sad white face, as she looks back at him, an expression of horror, pain, contempt, such as haunts him for many a day; and, tearing her hand from

his hold she turns and hurries from the room. He stands for a moment half abashed by that last look before he goes away; yet, when he comes to consider, he is not entirely dissatisfied. He will give her a day or two to calm down, he decides; sooner or later she must turn to him; he has not laboured so long to be baffled at last. It never occurs to him that she, too, has left the house, and as they are pursuing different directions, they do not meet.

Gabrielle, careless of the cold, bareheaded, speeds rapidly down the street, intent only on one object, with that one awful sentence ringing in her ears, "Died under the guillotine to-day." She has not gone far, lonely as is the immediate neighbourhood, before she meets, walking quickly, a man in the uniform of the National Guard. A quick scrutinising glance shows her a kind shrewd face, and she lays a set of icy trembling

fingers on his arm. Her voice is hoarse and choking, and she has to make an effort twice before she can ask her question.

"Citoyen, tell me who have suffered to-day."

His face clouds over at once, and his mouth twitches, though he looks wonderingly at the dark uncovered head, the grief-stricken face.

"I do not remember the names of all the forty-three, citoyenne," he says, civilly, "but —but there was the poor young ci-devant Maurepas for one—"

Her face seems to grow grey and fixed, but her eyes never move from his face.

"I doubt I have not heard the last of it," he goes on; "but I had him for more than a year in my house, and—and I wish he was there still," ends poor Dutollet, piteously. "I see you were his friend, citoyenne, so I do not mind saying it."

To his extreme consternation, the strange lady stoops with a wild sob and presses her lips passionately to his honest hand.

"*You* were his friend, and I, oh, my God, his enemy," she mutters, and turning away, she vanishes swiftly, leaving Dutollet transfixed with amazement and perplexity, in which condition he goes to his now lonely home with a very heavy heart, to mourn for the lost guest whom he sheltered so loyally and unselfishly, and whose death he laments so deeply. He has no long space for regret, for to-night he is arrested, and only that he is known, and that interest is made for him, he too would fall under the unsparing axe. But of one thing I am sure, that even then he does not repent the part he has last played in the great tragedy, and that the remembrance of it abides with him, and sweetens his suffering, and gives a light to days to come. Let him rest in peace, his memory embalmed

by that one enduring act of divine charity and gratitude.

And Gabrielle de Thouars goes back to her home, seeing and hearing nothing in the street round her, any more than if she were blind or deaf. She takes up again her post of watching by her aunt's sick-bed, and there, alone, save for Madame's motionless figure, and uncomprehending presence, wrestles with such anguish as can come but once in a lifetime, and which leaves its scars until that is ended. She kneels down on the floor and buries her face in the chair by the bedside, as soon as Babette has gone, mindful even in the extremity of her pain, not to disturb the sick woman; and then her brain seems to reel under the tide of terrible thoughts that rush in. She has killed him, she has killed him—but for her he might have left Paris in safety, but for her he might never have been denounced, De Sabran would never have

hunted him down. Ah, will that guilt always cleave to her? Will she never, never be able to cast it from her? If she could only die too, then, perhaps, in the ages to come, they might meet again, and he would forgive her at last. Not so, Gabrielle; life, no more than death, is at our bidding, and your appointed time has not yet come. The burden laid on your shoulders will not be loosed for many a weary year, and you will have to learn the bitter lesson of endurance. Hard that road will be, harder even than you can foresee, but there is light in the far horizon. The flint-stones are sharp and thick in the Valley of Desolation, but beyond are cool, green pastures where you can heal your bleeding feet, and at the end is the resting-place.

Through the long night-watches, Madame de Drou sleeps or wakes unconscious, and then talks to friends long passed away, and of things for years forgotten. At such times

Gabrielle holds her hand, or answers her rambling words in the same low tone, but when the intervals of slumber come, she is free again, and with tearless face bowed down and hidden, and burning hands wrung tight, knows not, nor cares how the time goes by. All night there she keeps her vigil of suffering, and the tardy, winter morning breaks, and Babette comes softly in, to take her turn in watching that Mademoiselle may rest.

She draws the window-curtain noiselessly, and Gabrielle, with a slow, listless step moves forward to the light, and stands for a moment looking out. Babette's eyes are fixed on her, and she utters a smothered cry of dismay.

Gabrielle turns slowly, looking at her with wide, uncomprehending eyes, and speaks in a voice apathetic, from excess of pain.

"What hast thou, Babette?"

"But—Mademoiselle's hair! Do but look in the glass, Mademoiselle!"

Gabrielle turns wearily to the mirror, hardly conscious, even of the most languid curiosity. It is true. That night has not past without leaving its visible mark. In the dark, soft hair, pushed back now from her aching forehead, are streaks and patches of white, which were not there twelve hours ago. She moves away with a sad, strange smile. It signifies so little now.

CHAPTER XIX.

OUT OF THE CITY OF THE PLAGUE.

> The weary mariner so fast not flies
> An howling tempest, harbour to attain.
>
> *Drummond.*

THE following evening, Gabrielle de Thouars is, indeed, left desolate. With terrified Babette, with a small, reserved doctor, who would once have been utterly deferential to Mademoiselle, but who now addresses her punctiliously, as citoyenne, being by force of circumstances rather than from any strength of opinions on the subject, an excellent patriot, she stands by her aunt's death-bed. Just at the end, which comes soon after sunset, Madame de Drou regains full consciousness, and beckons Gabrielle to lean over her, with a faint, loving recognition.

"I leave thee to Raoul, my child," she whispers, brokenly; and her niece, with a wrung heart, withholds the cruel truth that would so embitter these last moments. They are very few now; two or three long, slow, breaths, a momentary pressure of the hand she holds, and so Madame drifts away into the silence. Gabrielle stoops and kisses the serene face and nerveless hands, and then walks slowly away to her own room. She shed no tears, utters no lamentation. Twenty-four hours ago, she could not have looked so calmly on at the death of the one relative who had cared for and cherished her so long, of her who had been a mother to her, but it is, for the present, as if she had been stunned. She is too numb from the blow dealt her yesterday, to feel this second one fully, as yet. She is alone—alone always now, she thinks, and she must sit down, to consider the future. She dares not look back. So far, the

strongest sentiment of which she is conscious, is the one desperate resolve to escape. Yes, she can do anything, dare anything, if only she can leave Paris behind her. But first, she must arrange for the funeral of Madame de Drou, and it is the first sharp pang that smites her, that this must be so marred; that the beloved dust must be laid, not among the nobles of her race, but in the great cemetery on whose gates the Republic has written "Eternal Sleep."

The next day this is done, for every moment is precious, and De Sabran is to be feared. Next, she dismisses Babette. There is no help for it; they could not escape together, so they part, with many tears on the part of the soubrette who has been, in her way, a faithful servant, and she returns to her friends. She is in no danger, for her father, a baker, is in the National Guard, and has never been under any suspicion. Then

Mademoiselle de Thouars finds herself utterly alone and loses no time in putting her plans into execution. She has provided herself with disguises, and hopes by passing for a market woman from the immediate outskirts to escape any questioning at the Barrières. It is a wild hope, she knows, but it is the only one left to her.

She stands still in the little salon, and looks round her, a rapid farewell glance. She will never see it again. . . . She is in the street now, walking quickly along, the empty basket, which is to support her character, on her arm. Once started, her courage rises, and though anything like hope is very distant from her mind, she begins to feel a dull interest in her own plans again. She is yet some distance from the Barrière, where she expects her real difficulties to begin, when two or three women walking together come full upon her, and one of them plants herself

directly in her path. Gabrielle feels the blood curdle round her heart as she recognises Philippine Drouet. Her feelings of a moment ago are absolutely enviable, as she acknowledges with something like shame, how inexpressibly dear life still is.

Philippine looks at her and into her basket.

"You are going back early, my little citoyenne," she says; "hast thou sold all thy eggs? Eh, why art thou so pale?" she adds, with a rapid change of tone.

Gabrielle looks her steadily in the face.

"I have been very ill, citoyenne, and this is the first day I have come into Paris since."

The other still scrutinizes her curiously as if trying to identify some resemblance, but evidently at a loss. A sudden desperate inspiration darts into Gabrielle's mind.

"I came in with some others, but the citoyenne will observe I return alone. Will the amiable citoyenne be good enough to pass

me through the Barrière? I am desolated to make the request, but I hoped to meet la Mère Rotrou before now—"

Whatever suspicions have crossed Philippine Drouet's mind appear to be dispelled, for she readily turns and accompanies the country girl to the gate, where a few words from her, added to the stranger's ready answers, and the name she gives, suffice to remove this first obstacle, and the lonely fugitive finds herself outside that city of horror. She has passed a danger she herself cannot accurately realise, for had Philippine Drouet discovered who the dark-eyed paysanne really was, her fate would have been sealed. Once a prisoner, even De Sabran's influence would have been powerless to save her.

That night she finds shelter in the poor home of a woman, who readily believes her description of herself, having no turn for suspicion, and who sees no reason why she

should not be belated on her road. Once housed she ponders over her next step, for hitherto she has only thought of leaving Paris as far as possible behind her.

What she would, perhaps, most wish would be to find herself at Cennes, with Eulalie's loving arms round her again; but that idea she dismisses at once, as utterly impracticable. By dint of inquiry, she hears from her hostess, who is sufficiently loquacious, that near by there is staying the wife of an officer in the army of the Rhine, who is on the point of starting with her children for Saverne, in order to be near her husband, a warrior who began his meritorious career as a blacksmith. This piece of information inspires Mdlle. de Thouars, with a sudden hope. Early the next morning she goes off to the lady in question, and offers herself as an attendant on the journey. She has been left an orphan, she says, and wishes to go to

the only friends left to her, who are in Alsace. She had been brought up in Paris, the citoyenne will observe, consequently she has not the Alsatian accent. She does not wish for remuneration if only the citoyenne so influential, so generous, will permit her to accompany her. The lady she addresses, though an ardent Jacobin and Montagnard, is quite open to flattery, and likes to be considered influential, which she is not, in the slightest degree. Moreover, she thinks, as it can be done, without expense, it will be pleasant to have a docile young person to help and solace her, and generally save her all trouble on her journey, so after a little consideration, and many questions all readily answered, comes to the conclusion that Jeanneton will fill the post to admiration. Accordingly, Jeanneton takes up her abode for one night, and the next morning sees them start on the first stage of their journey.

Then the fugitive does feel a sense of relief, amid the dull aching of her heart, at the knowledge that she has fairly left behind her the place and enemy so dreaded and detested. She is helpful and ready, she performs all that is required of her punctiliously, but she is not an amusing companion on the journey. She does not enter into the witticisims of Sanson, which amuse her companion so enormously, nay, she even turns pale when La Sainte Guillotine is the subject of conversation, which, at this time of day seems absurd. Nevertheless, the citoyenne Joubert never dreams from first to last that Jeanneton's cap covers a head that was once adorned with powder and jewels, that in short, she is helping the escape of an aristocrat. Once arrived within Carlen's lines, Jeanneton even attracts a considerable amount of admiration among the patriotic warriors there; but she is so insensible to

this advantage as to meet all advances with frigid coldness. At last the opportunity so long watched for is afforded. Wurmser, having surprised Carlen, enters Haguenau; and Gabrielle has not much difficulty in giving her mistress the slip, and reaching the Austrian headquarters. There the revelation of her name and rank procures her instant respect, and without further hindrance she reaches, finally, Coblenz, where she finds, if not any very dear friends, at least many who receive her joyfully as if risen from the dead.

A long, wasting sickness overtakes Gabrielle de Thouars at the end of her weary wanderings, but she struggles painfully back to life, the shadow of her former self, and with little, as it seems to her, for which to live. But she takes up again the strained chord of existence carefully tended, tenderly sheltered in an emigrant family she has known in

other days, and she sets to work to support herself, if possible, by the labour of her hands,—no easy task to her. To a certain extent she succeeds, and is at least no burden on those who have taken her in; but it is a weary life, and the days go heavily on, and there seems no end.

CHAPTER XX.

THE WHITE BANNER.

He died the beautiful death, for the Church and the King.

PARIS was not the only place in France, by very many, where terror and pain and suffering were known, in those days of the winter of '93-'94.

The Vendéans had struggled on all through the autumn with matchless constancy and heroism. At the battle of Cholet, Bonchamps, their great leader, was mortally wounded; but, ere he died, obtained from his colleagues the release of four thousand republican prisoners. So great a blow to the Cause did his death appear, that the victorious generals wrote to the Convention, "La Vendée is no more." But the Catholic army

still existed. Broken, dismembered it might be; but their fugitive columns still numbered from thirty to forty thousand men, and they, it must be remembered, were inspired by the absolute faith that they were on God's side, fighting to reclaim France for Him. It was the same spirit which animated that Poitevin peasant, who, single-handed, attempted to resist the gendarmes' inquisition. They gave him two-and-twenty wounds, and bade him surrender himself. "Give me back my God," he gasped, and died. There were many such. Many so nerved by enthusiasm, that they took the guns of the Republic, armed only with iron-pointed stakes, and there was never known one single instance of treachery among them.

Nothing but his failing health, failing surely now, and his sister's defenceless condition, prevented Eugène de St Hilaire from casting in his lot with the Vendéans; but

even had these obstacles been removed, such an attempt would have been impossible now. After Noirmoutier had been retaken from Charette, a large body of Republicans established themselves at Angers, while another occupied the Camp of St George near Nantes. Meanwhile, Kleber was collecting all his forces at the Black City, where, early in December the Vendéans made their appearance, and after endeavouring to cross the Loire, made an equally ineffectual attempt to take Angers. It was a vast multitude which formed that hapless army; women, children, the helpless and infirm. Much such an array, which, led by Peter the Hermit and Gottschalk, went forth, the doomed pioneers of the first Crusade. And their sufferings were scarcely less. It was bitter cold, and all had come from far, dragging their failing limbs from place to place, till they could go no further. Where they

dropped they fell, and where they fell they died; yet, even in extremity of misery, even the tenderest and the frailest never lost the constancy which had supported them so unswervingly. These were sorrowful days at Cennes; many of the youth of the village had taken up arms under Bonchamps and others; and they returned no more. The cruel winter pinched the old who remained, and their lonely hearts were sore.

Daily Eulalie went among them,—Eugène could not often go now—and daily she would try to comfort those who mourned for their banished children, and cheer them with hopes of brighter days to come. She was on her way now, alone, as usual, hurrying down from under the leafless limes. From the grey, dreary sky, the snow was beginning to fall again, adding to the icy mantle already veiling path and tree. Her feet fell noiseless on the white road, and from among her

furs her gentle face looked out, pale and pure. She had her own share of sorrows, poor little Eulalie, which might well sadden those loving eyes. Victor away, nobody knew where, and Eugène — ah, Eugène, surely very ill. She could not hide that from herself now; but still a little care through the winter, and with the spring, he would certainly revive. She told herself so resolutely; at very short intervals, but, nevertheless, she could not prevent the sharp pang, the first thought of him always brought. Then, the people, poor and suffering, they were Père Florian's legacy to her. She had never forgotten those last words of one so saintly; and even now the remembrance made her quicken her pace. As she came out on to the open road she looked round her at the distant view, in summer time so fair, now so unutterably dreary. Far away, through the thickening flakes, loomed Angers, stern and strong;

but, beyond the walls, what was that dark moving mass? She stood still for an instant, and tried to distinguish it, but the storm was rapidly increasing, and the snow, as it whirled and eddied down, prevented her doing so. The piercing wind drove full in her face, but she bent her head and walked quickly, for her errand led her to some distance. She had passed the village, and was on the road to Angers, where was one hut containing a sick child, when she was suddenly stopped by the sight of what appeared a heap of clothes lying in her path. She stooped, half timidly, and saw that it was a woman. Eulalie knelt down beside her in the snow, and raised her head. They were too far from any house to call for help, and having found this poor waif, Eulalie was afraid to leave her. The eyelids quivered and opened slowly. The woman was quite young, and perhaps had been handsome, but

she was visibly too near death for anyone to notice that. Eulalie hastily took some wine from her basket, and, with very tremulous unaccustomed fingers, tried to force some between the blue lips and clenched teeth, tears of sacred compassion running down her own face. The woman looked up at her with fast glazing eyes.

"Hunger and cold," she whispered; "it is for God—God and our country."

She died a few minutes afterwards, her head on Eulalie's knee, the long black tresses falling dank with snow. It was never known who she was, but she was not the only one who so perished. Privation and the bitter season killed many more round Angers before the Vendéans were able to reach La Flêche and Le Mans.

Eulalie, yet unused to such scenes, was still bending over the dead girl, striving by all the means in her power to restore anima-

tion to that grey, set face, when a voice calling her name made her look up. The snow had covered so thickly the road that the sound of the new-comer's horse had been lost, but now on turning round she saw none other than Victor de Limeuil. The piteous scene before her had so engrossed her that she had scarcely felt astonished at the new apparition, and her first words were an entreaty for help. He had already dismounted, and was bending over the motionless figure, but he stood up quickly.

"It is no use," he said, "she is quite dead. But, oh, my Eulalie, I have but a moment. I came this way on the chance, but I must go back," he added, breathlessly.

Eulalie looked bewildered.

"Then the army—"

"Yes, we are over there, and attack Angers to-night."

"And then you will come?"

"Assuredly, dear. Adieu."

"But if not, if you are repulsed, when will you come, Victor?" She held his hand imploringly.

"God knows," he said sadly. "May the blessed saints have thee in their keeping. It is for God and our country."

Eulalie was left alone to wonder if it was a dream, or if Victor had really been there and speaking with her. Then the piteous sight at her feet recalled her to the necessity for action of some sort. Once more addressing herself to the path, she struggled on through the storm to the hut, which was the original object of her walk, and there gave directions that the poor nameless body should be conveyed into the village, where Christian sepulture was given to it. Then, after tending for a little while the sick child, and saying a few words of comfort to the mother from her own full heart, she set out on her return.

The winter afternoon was closing in, and, though the snow had almost ceased, the wind blew fiercely, but it was at her back now, and she got on with less difficulty. Naturally enough her mind was diverted from the sorrowful scene she had passed through by Victor de Limeuil's subsequent apparition. It was startling at the moment, but not so very astonishing after all. Eulalie knew that a large proportion of the Vendéans were approaching, and it was only a question whether he were with them or the thousand who followed La Rochejaquelein into Normandy. But the suddenness of Victor's appearance, and the equal abruptness of his departure, were sufficiently disturbing elements. And as she walked back she began to be conscious, amid the howling of the wind, of a dull reverberation. Ah, yes, the attack on the town had begun. Perhaps to-morrow the Catholic army might be in

possession of Angers, and then all would be well. Victor had promised that he would come at once. What was it—the last words he said? Strange that they should be the same—a little shudder passed over her—the same as the dying lips of that forlorn wanderer had uttered a few moments before. "For God and our country." Could they be an omen of evil? No, a thousand times no. It would all end happily, and Eugène would get well. That was the beginning and end of all her thoughts now—Eugène *must* recover.

Poor little Eulalie's simple faith scarcely seemed justified by the turn events took. The next day Westermann appeared, obliging the Vendéans to draw off from Angers, and Kléber coming up also, they were compelled to fall back into Bretagne.

But the end of that heroic struggle was at hand.

Kléber and Westermann followed in close

pursuit, and a great slaughter ensued. The remnants of the Catholic and Royal army fled first to Laval, then to the extreme point of Bretagne, but they were reached at Savenai, where five or six thousand perished. So ended the crusade of the eighteenth century, and the Republican generals Kléber and Marceau were received at Nantes in triumph. But though the insurrection was virtually crushed, the smouldering embers of revolt were not crushed out for long afterwards. Henri de la Rochejaquelein was still alive and indomitable in energy, and with him was Victor de Limeuil. News came to Cennes that he was safe after the carnage of Savenai, but beyond that nothing was known for some time. St Hilaire had often before this urged on his sister the practicability of her departure into Bretagne, where they had friends besides Madame de Limeuil, but no representations would induce her to entertain

the idea in any way. "I will never leave thee, Eugène—never," she always said, and he had not the heart to say more, and indeed had ceased for months now to broach the question. But when the terrible tidings of Savenai came—when the Republic, incensed by the long and obstinate resistance of La Vendée, began to exact stern and pitiless reprisals—when Carrier, armed with entirely irresponsible power, arrived at Nantes, and, through months of horror, emulated the worst atrocities of antiquity, even as Collot d'Herbois at Lyons—then Eugène looked at his sister, and repented that he had not resisted her loving entreaties, and placed her, in spite of herself, in safety. As far as was possible he kept the knowledge of what was passing so near, from her, and she still retained, partly from temperament, partly from the secluded life she led, an almost unshaken faith in her brother's capacity, as well as will,

to take care of her. *He* knew, with how deep a sorrow, how vain that was. Awful tidings were coming from Nantes, and at Angers, nearer still, the work of death was beginning.

CHAPTER XXI.

BAFFLED.

"The lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see."

Léon de Sabran is writing busily in his room. It is indicative of the man that this last, in spite of his press of business and the haste in which he is constantly involved, is in perfect, and even precise order.

His papers, voluminous as they are, are ready to his hand as he needs them; his books stand in their places hard by. He has read, and still reads, a good deal at odd times, and his studies are almost fantastically miscellaneous—philosophy, mysticism, much poetry of diverse kinds. Molière is by the side of Rousseau. . . . .

Though it is winter, a glass of fresh flowers

stands on the table, and he touches the petals thoughtfully with his finger now and then. Why not? Robespierre loves flowers too, and children, and talks the gentlest amenities among his chosen friends at home, and De Sabran is not a Robespierre yet.

As he sits there, in spite of his dress, he looks anything but a demagogue, though his dark hair falls loose and dishevelled over his voluminous, "incroyable" cravat. The handsome, clean-cut profile is bent over his work, as the delicate, nervous hand, not quite so white now as in the old days of the Regiment de Picardie and Madame de Drou's receptions, travels rapidly across the paper.

He is not thinking at this particular moment of Gabrielle de Thouars, for he possesses in perfection the power of concentrating his thoughts on the business of the hour. His mind, however, is pretty much at ease on that score. He has been unavoidably absent

from Paris for two days, but he intends to see her to-day, and clench his victory.

Madame de Drou must be dying or dead by this time, her niece utterly friendless, and everything must thus accomplish itself as he intends.

A gentle knock at the door, and a man comes in and advances to the table.

It is the same person who found out Père Florian's lodging a year ago, who has performed various services of the same kind for his patron, and who is not troubled with any inconvenient scruples. He is not prepossessing in point of personal appearance, and thus affords a strong contrast to the other's refined face, which is raised as the door opens.

"I am but this instant returned," remarks De Sabran; "wait a moment, my good Antoine."

A few minutes, during which the pen scratches on; then he throws it down, and,

shaking back his long hair, looks expectantly in his visitor's face.

"You have news, Antoine," he says tentatively.

"It is of the citoyenne Thouars," begins the other, "her aunt, the citoyenne Drou, died the night before last—"

"So soon," interrupts his employer. Well?"

"Well, citoyen, she was buried this day. I know no more."

"But the niece—the other lady?" says De Sabran, impatiently.

"She was there this afternoon," answers Antoine, "I came from thence to watch for the citoyen's return."

Léon de Sabran is thinking, his eyes fixed on the floor. At last, he raises them.

"You have done well," he says slowly. "Is there anything more?"

"Only, if the citoyen would be of use to

the citoyenne Thouars, he would do well to be speedy. She has been denounced to-day to the Committee of the Section."

"Bah, it is nothing: that has been done before, and I have averted it. It is of no consequence."

Antoine looks up for an instant, a little astonishment mingling with his usually sinister expression, but he answers, submissively,

"The citoyen is doubtless right; nevertheless, it is as I have said."

"It is well," said De Sabran, rising, "come to-morrow early," and he throws down some money, with hardly concealed contempt. The spy, however, promptly appropriates his payment, and goes his way.

Meanwhile, De Sabran prepares for his own triumphant visit.

"All will be well now," he says to himself, as he goes down the stairs, "this matter of the denunciation complicates the affair a little,

and it may be necessary that she should leave Paris for a time; but, after all, it is easy of arrangement. Ah, my fair Gabrielle, have I not laid my plans well? I have been very patient, and gathered the net, week by week, but there is no escape now. Only to the Conciergerie, and I fancy you will scarcely choose such an alternative. For all your pride, you have not courage for that, Mademoiselle."

It does not take him very long to reach the house, so lately tenanted by Madame de Drou, and the dim oil lamp, already lighted, enables him to see her name, among those of the other inhabitants, written up outside, in compliance with a recent decree of the Convention.

He turns into the apartment of the concierge, who sits by her fire, knitting.

"So the citoyenne Drou is dead, my good citoyenne," he begins, "and her niece—"

The concierge looks sharply up at him.

"The citoyen ought to know. He used to come often enough," she says.

"What do you mean?" he asks hastily, a doubt, for the first time, crossing his mind.

She shrugs her shoulders.

"What do I mean! The citoyenne is not here. I do not know where she is, I—"

"Not here!"

"But it is that. The aunt was buried to-day, and the young citoyenne was crushed, penetrated with regrets. After the funeral I ascend to offer my help, my sympathy. I find solitude, no one there. She is gone, slipped out of the house without my hearing her; in effect, without a word of farewell," concludes the concierge, with an offended sniff. "It is true, I find a packet with the amount that is due to me; but the want of sentiment, it is that which disgusts me."

De Sabran hears her out patiently, in the

very extremity of his surprise. He has never dreamt of this contingency; he cannot even now believe it. Without a word, he goes up the stairs into the deserted apartments, lately the home of Madame de Drou and her niece. They have always been dreary, a dismal and squalid substitute for the Hôtel Drou, but there seems to be the silence of death there now.

Books, clothes, scattered about in confusion; every sign of a hurried evasion. Open on a table lies a miniature of Gabrielle, painted two or three years back. As his furious glance takes in all the inanimate surroundings he almost fancies that the dark eyes meet his with a mocking exultation. Indeed, could she, who has escaped him, whose picture he now snatches up, glance but once at his face as he stands there, it might in some measure sweeten her triumph. Mortification, so deep as to be almost ludi-

crous, is the first expression visible, but it is succeeded by a dark look of revengeful malice as he turns swiftly, and hurries downstairs again.

Breathlessly, he plies the concierge with questions, but he can elicit nothing more, for the excellent reason that she has nothing to tell. Stamping with angry impatience at having lost so much time, he turns away, but on the threshold he throws down the picture, and, with a bitter curse, grinds the ivory into shivers beneath his heel.

Once in the street he quickly collects his impressions, and proceeds to concert the speediest means of regaining his lost prize. Regain her he will, at any cost, at any risk, even if he gives her up with his own hands to the Sectional Committee. But *where* is she? She can have got but two, or, at the most, three hours' start of him, he feels sure. She has no friends left in Paris; of that, too, he

is certain. Ah, she will try to reach Anjou—Cennes. Yes, she will doubtless make an effort to join the St. Hilaires,—well, she would have been stopped at the Barrière. With renewed hope, he hurries thither, with what result, we already know. And so it comes to pass, that De Sabran is waiting and questioning with feverish impatience at one gate, while Gabrielle de Thouars, passed through the other by the unconscious Philippine, has already found shelter.

It is long before Léon de Sabran owns himself beaten. Day after day his spies watch at all the outlets; day after day he inspects the lists of the prisoners, half hoping, half fearing to see her name; until at last a rumour comes from the army of the Rhine, that Mademoiselle de Thouars has joined a family of émigrés at Coblentz, and as time rolls on this rumour is confirmed.

He is outwitted. Yes, it has all been in

vain, all in vain that he has steeped his soul in sin, that he has the blood of Père Florian and Raoul de Maurepas on his hands, a stain that will cleave to them. He has gained nothing by it after all. There is stern justice in this; the wicked do not always flourish like a green bay-tree, or, if the leaves for a time are fresh and luxuriant, there is often a canker at the heart, unseen, gnawing none the less surely.

CHAPTER XXII.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

"The cry is still they come."

"THOU art pale, Eugène; thou shouldst not have gone out to-day, in the bitter wind." Eulalie lays her hand softly on her brother's; as she drags a stool to his side, and sits down close to him. There is a bright wood fire on the hearth, which blazes cheerfully, and tall wax candles burn in the sconces, reduplicated in the long mirror at the end of the salon. The wind blows wildly and eerily outside; but the long blue velvet curtains are drawn close before the windows; and the room is a picture of quiet comfort, to which the touch of life needed is given by the two figures near the fire.

Eulalie, small, slight, and pale as ever; the fair hair drawn loosely back from the gentle young face, which is bent down on Eugène's arm. She wears powder no more than she did two years and a half ago, when Gabrielle de Thouars laughed at her for it, and she certainly looks no older; her brocade gown and muslin bouffant do not succeed in adding any appearance of age or dignity. Eugène de St Hilaire is leaning back in a large arm-chair, looking steadily into the bright blaze. His head is thrown back, and one can see that the features are sharpened; and about his whole appearance there is the languor of constant ill-health, but, on the whole, he scarcely looks worse than he did at Easter, when he spoke so confidently of his death as fast approaching. It is not that he complains, for this he never does, nor that he gives way, for he performs all his accustomed duties punctiliously; but his bodily health has

always been weak, and he has long possessed the conviction that his life will not be a long one.

He is powdered—if Eulalie is not—as carefully as ever, and his lace ruffles fall over the delicate, ringed hand on which his sister has laid her soft young cheek.

"I wish we could hear from Gabrielle," she says, wistfully. "It is months and months ago since I had a letter, and that had been opened."

"Yes," he answers, with the slight tinge of cynicism which is all his gentle nature ever indulges in; "such is the paternal government we enjoy. I fear she may have suffered much, and Madame her aunt also."

"It is a terrible place now—this Paris," says Eulalie, with a shudder; "if she were only here—"

His eyebrows contract, and a look of pain crosses the clear, refined face. He is silent

for a few moments as if he were making some resolution before he speaks.

"My Eulalie," he says very gently; "I do not think we are so much better off here now. There has been this fighting in Bretagne—at Savenai; and there are executions at Nantes—and Angers."

She raises her head and looks at him, her soft grey eyes wide and awe-struck.

"I heard something about Angers yesterday; then it is true, Eugène?"

"I fear it is," he answers, and they are both silent for a little space, looking into the bright, clear fire.

"If we could hear mass once again, I should not mind so much," says Eulalie, sadly, at last.

"We must wait for that," he answers, rousing himself to speak more cheerfully; "thou shalt sing to me to-night, my little one; one of thy old songs."

She does not feel particularly inclined for music this evening, but Eugène seems to wish it, and she never disputes any request of his, so she gets up obediently and goes over to the harpsichord that was their mother's.

Eulalie's voice is not strong, only a quiet little thread of melody, but it is tender and sweet; and it has a soothing effect on her brother as he sits with clasped hands, listening and striving to divert his mind from painful presentiments. Eulalie sings on, one song after another; and at last takes from her modest pile of music the old hymn Père Florian used to love, and begins that.

There is a suspicion of tears in her voice, but the associations are not all sad ones, so the sweet notes ring on

> "Cœlestis urbs Jerusalem
> Beata pacis visio . . .
> . . . . .
> Sponsæque ritu cingeris
> Mille angelorum—"

A sudden, loud, angry knocking at the house-door, a wild clamour, a confused outcry in the hall.

The words die away on Eulalie's lips, as she springs to her feet, with a beating heart. Instinctively she rushes to Eugène's side, as he rises, and the door is flung wide open.

Two or three municipal guards, many dirty red-capped satellites, armed with muskets, and pistols stuck in their belts on one side to balance long knives on the other, precipitate themselves into the salon. Some others remain in the hall, where there is a back-ground of terrified, panic-stricken servants. St Hilaire confronts the intruders, outwardly calm. At the moment of peril the instincts of race assert themselves, and he stands erect and cool, by the chair from which he has risen; Eulalie clinging with trembling hands to his arm.

"You are the ci-devant Count de St

Hilaire," says the foremost municipal, as soon as he recovers his breath. "Good; then you must come at once."

"And where, Messieurs?" asks St Hilaire.

"Where then! why, to Angers. You are suspected, denounced, an aristocrat, what do I know? You are to appear before the Tribunal of the Committee of Public Safety."

For an instant the accused looks round him with a glance of mute appeal. He has expected this for some days, and it has come. The mob of savages, the arms, the insults, he has pictured it all to himself more than once. There is no hope, no escape.

"I am ready to accompany you," he says with grave composure; "but," he adds, his voice trembling for the first time; "this lady —my sister—can remain here. Her presence cannot be required?"

"Not at all; the citoyenne must come too," says the delegate, with brisk cheerfulness;

" but yes, there are many ladies suspected too, trust me, my little aristocrat. It is an amusement, too, of the best, that tribunal, is it not, my Jacques," he adds, appealing to one of his satellites who is also much impressed by the humour of the thing, and testifies to his opinion with a drunken nod.

" I am glad of it, Eugène," whispers Eulalie, though her white lips quiver, but he only looks at her, with a helpless, agonised despair.

The delegates of the Committee of Public Safety do not appear in any immediate hurry to complete their mission.

At least they find time to discuss a copious supper, and drink an inconceivable quantity of the Count de St Hilaire's wine, while the prisoners await their pleasure in the salon under a guard. Having eaten and drunk all that is possible, and ransacked the château completely, the chief municipal conceives it

to be his duty to affect great haste and alacrity. Accordingly he bursts into the salon with immense noise and bustle.

"Now," he proclaims, "do not let us waste any more time. This is not a night to keep good patriots out long. Thy carriage is ready, citoyen."

There is no more to be said. Their own coach, driven by a grimy patriot, in enormous cross-belts, is drawn up at the door, and the brother and sister enter it, followed by two of their guards, while the rest form an extremely noisy and turbulent escort. Just as Eulalie steps into the carriage, after one sorrowful, bewildered look at the weeping servants, who are permitted to witness this dismal departure, one of the torches, lighted by the shouting, singing, reeling crew, shines on the face of one man who stands close to the door looking steadily at her.

In spite of bonnet-rouge and wild beard, in

spite of her own scattered ideas, Eulalie at once recognises Gaston, Nanette's recusant son. She even fancies he makes a sign to her, hurriedly. She has not the least idea what it means, or what he can do to serve them, she has every reason to think ill of him, but the sight does, in some measure, strangely enough, relieve the utter forlornness of her own and her brother's condition.

So they leave their own old home, the home of their fathers for long past generations, not knowing, scarcely hoping, that they will ever see it again. Through the wild mirk night,—with the torches flaring and smoking round them in the eddying wind, which puts out one half of them,—with their ears ringing with the shouts and hideous songs of their captors,—they journey slowly into Angers. The old familiar landmarks are hidden from their eyes in the darkness of the storm; all they can see is a fitful, confused maze of

pitiless, powder-blackened faces. If any of the peasants, roused by the clamour, drowning the shriek of the tempest, look timidly out to see that dismal cortège go by, if they comprehend that it is M. le Comte dragged off to prison, they can only cower in helpless sorrow, and no sign of sympathy is possible. The birds are in the toils now, and the cage awaits them surely. The municipals talk incessantly, and sometimes laugh, and are altogether extremely cheerful, being happily sheltered from the weather, in marked superiority to the rest of their companions; but the captives utter never a word to each other all the weary way; they scarcely move or sigh even, but their hands are locked together in a piteous clasp.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FUSILLADE.

We kissed again with tears.

"And hold a lily in his hand,
For death's annunciation."

THE tribunal at Angers has its hands very full in these days, and therefore despatches its work as expeditiously as possible, in common with the like proceedings throughout the country. There are so many Royalists, it would seem, yet remaining on the soil of France, so many Girondists, so many enthusiasts, who encumber the proceedings of the Convention with their inconvenient scruples, and they must be disposed of. The prisons are full to overflowing, and room is wanted daily for fresh inhabitants.

Collot d'Herbois at Lyons, Carrier at Nantes, display considerable ingenuity in the means they employ for the disposal of this surplus population, not to speak of the untiring, if monotonous, feast of La Sainte Guillotine at Paris. And here at Angers, so near, like Nantes, to the obstinate Bocage, there is much to do. A frightful payment is exacted, a terrible vengeance executed on the long struggle of the Vendéans, with the pitiless resolve to blot out every vestige of that memorable warfare in streams of blood.

The Count de St Hilaire and his sister do not languish in prison long before their trial, and the proceedings on that occasion are not likely to be fatiguing from their continuance. They have been but two days from their home, when they are summoned before the tribunal, and they go with very little doubt as to the result.

They are not the only prisoners in the

court by any means. There are several peasants, suspected of complicity in the insurrection, among them one or two long-haired Bretons, some bourgeois from the town itself, two or three work-girls, an old lady of the "vieille roche," bent, feeble, withered, denounced because her parrot, the one companion left her in this lonely end of life, has been taught in other days to cry "Vive le Roi!"

Her turn comes first, and the offending bird is brought before the tribunal to confront her. She has some sense of humour, this poor old Baronne, and she can even smile as Chicot makes his appearance in his gilt cage, clambering about the bars, and hooking himself viciously on to them with his strong black beak.

The President, in an immense cocked hat, his elf locks falling over his voluminous cravat, the other officers of justice, the patriots

who help to fill the place, moved thereto simply by interest in the proceedings, all regard the parrot with manifest disapprobation.

"Say then, maudit coquin," says the President, addressing Chicot, "say Vive la République," to which the parrot, giving himself a final twist over beneath his gilded dome, answers only by a discordant scream.

"Citoyenne," says the President, much incensed, "tell thy bird to say it. Thou hast taught him the other."

"One cannot teach these things in a moment, Monsieur," she answers, in her weak, tremulous voice, and Chicot, hearing the well-known tones, instantly proclaims in his loudest voice, "Vive le Roi!"

It seals her doom. She has fed him and trained him, with the patient love of a kindly soul to God's weakest creatures, and now her one harmless favourite is made her innocent accuser.

"Death" is recorded, and the poor old prisoner is removed; but her own fate seems to move her less than that of her pet and plaything. A spasm of keen pain crosses the aged face, though she has listened unmoved to her own sentence, as she hears a smothered cry, and sees Chicot's neck wrung, and the limp, dead body flung into a corner. Only a bird, ah, yes; but she has so little else to care for—she has seen friends go before her, and some she trusted have failed her, but Chicot was always loving and true. . . .

Eugène de St Hilaire comes next, and stands to receive his sentence, with Eulalie by his side. She looked round her once as she entered that dreary, gloomy room—a rapid comprehensive glance, which takes in all the dismal accessories of the scene, and only once. Now she stands shrinking, drooping, yet content amid her dream of suffering, because she is still with Eugène. As to him,

he is soon disposed of. He is a noble, and has been in correspondence with Vendéan leaders—that is more than enough. Death! He listens with the grave composure natural to him, but his mind is intent on one object. If only he can save Eulalie. So young, so weak, so utterly harmless—what use can it be to take her life? He is illogical in his premises at this supreme moment. Those two work-girls clinging to each other, in a trance of terror, are as young as she, and as innocent, but for them, no more than for her, is there any mercy here. He makes his one hopeless effort. He speaks steadily, if a little hurriedly.

"Citoyen, I accept the sentence, but I entreat you to release my sister. No danger can possibly be apprehended from her—"

"The citoyenne has doubtless wished well to the aristocrats," says the President, inter-

rupting him impatiently, "it is enough. Remove them."

The prisons proper of Angers are full, even the dungeons of Philip Augustus' castle, where the floors are triangular, so that the miserable captives can never assume a posture of any ease or comfort. Century upon century has past since the last workman gathered up his tools, and left the grim fortress to frown down on the city it dominates. Generations of captives have sent up their "sorrowful sighing" through these stern walls, but never until now have there been so many victims who will know no deliverance but death. So many that the authorities utilise the cells of a deserted convent from which the poor religious have been driven some time ago. It is a tall dreary house, built round a small square, into which the barred windows look. This is the last earthly home of Eugène de St Hilaire and his sister, and here they return

when the trial is over. In their cell, not alone, for so many are the victims that every space is filled, the brother and sister look once more in each other's face.

Only a few hours left—and they cling together in one long embrace, as if nothing could ever part them. Nothing *will* part them now on this side the grave, the grave that is opened wide for them, even now.

"My Eulalie, my poor little sister, if I had but sent thee away before," says Eugène, his forced composure shaken, not for himself but for her.

"I am glad, Eugène," she whispers, "I could not have left thee."

They sit there, side by side, as they have sat in happy days at Cennes. How far off that time seems now. Is it months or years since they were brought here? Eulalie's white face is on his breast, her bright hair falls thick and shining over his arm. He is

thinking of that promise made long ago to his mother. Well, he has done his best, at least he has tried; perhaps she will understand it; perhaps it is better for the child to be safe out of this weary world where such things are permitted. They do not say much to each other as the hours fleet by that bring them to their doom. There is no need of many words between these two, who have loved with so entire and absorbing an affection. Once Eulalie speaks in her low, soft voice.

"Eugène, will it hurt much?"

"Not much, mignonne, and it will be very short," he says tenderly, with how agonised a yearning to spare her that pang only he himself knows.

There is a long pause, and then she speaks again.

"I wish—I wish we could confess once more," she says, wistfully, the tears rolling

slowly down her pale cheeks, and he answers patiently,

"The good God knows it all, and we are about to receive a great Absolution."

There is a monotony about these prison scenes; let us hurry over this one. There are so many like it, so many blameless and innocent as these two, are spending their last earthly night, before the knife, or the river, or the musket claims them, all over the reddened soil of France.

The night speeds by, and the tardy wan daylight comes; morning brightens slowly, and still no summons. At about ten o'clock they are told that they are not to suffer till towards evening; but it seems a cruel delay rather than a reprieve.

There are so many prisoners in Angers that the guillotine is found to work too slowly for the wholesale slaughter that is required, therefore a more expeditious plan has been

adopted. The victims are brought forth by tens and twenties at a time; they are shot down together, and buried where they fall. And this is the fate which awaits St Hilaire and his sister. At last the cell doors creak open, with a crash of keys and bolts, and the condemned are brought forth to the dark convent square, where a long pit has been dug. The red sad sunset of winter is crimsoning the sky far away, but over the sombre roofs which enclose the square is only the pale translucent blue. It must be very beautiful up at Cennes, the sun a ball of fire through the leafless trees; the mist coming up from the river yonder. . . .

There are many gathered here to die. Men and women, old and young, noble and peasant, one in the mystical communion of suffering. Without much loss of time, they are placed behind that yawning grave which is waiting to receive them, side by side.

They are very quiet and steadfast; no useless lamentations fill the air, but they face the muskets with the heroism of those rather who have come to lay down their lives—not to be bereft of them.

Eulalie does not look at them, nor at the shining barrels in front. Her eyes never move from Eugène's face, but there is no trace of tears on her own now. She seems to drink in strength and courage from his.

The time has come now; their hands are tightly clasped.

"Courage, dear, it will be Paradise," he whispers.

"I am not afraid now. Kiss me once more, Eugène."

"For the last time, my sister, my little one."

"Vive le roi," cry the victims. A cloud of smoke; a loud reverberation echoing back from the grim dark walls; a clatter of

recovered arms; an awful pile, for the trench does not hold all the slain; blood flowing . . . . Do not look again. Oh, France, France, what a cleansing that must needs be, whose perfecting requires such a sea of blood, of which this is but one of the least streams that break forth to feed it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OUT OF THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

> Love, art thou sweet?
> Then bitter death must be.

THE sunset has faded out of the pale sky, the shadows of the convent walls deepen quickly, and the darkness falls. No one touches that open grave where the dead lie, one on each other, their ghastly faces rigid and upturned, some of them, others hidden on the dank mould; the blood plashing sullenly in dark pools. . . . There is a picture which most of us know. Out of darkness loom the arches of the amphitheatre, stern, silent, deserted by the thousands who thronged them to-day, yet containing still a whisper of the cry that echoed then,

"Christianos ad Leones"! Down in the arena is the heap of saintly dead, and here and there a lion still keeping jealous guard. Above, the silver stars; and, through the sapphire loveliness of the southern night, solemn angel shapes come floating down. No visible guardians hover over this Angers square to-night, and perhaps we cannot fitly call its tenants martyrs, but they surely suffered patiently, and for no wrong-doing; therefore this place of execution, lonely and obscure, is to all time sanctified by the poor dishonoured clay.

A sentry has been placed at the corner of the convent square to keep watch over that sinister spot. He does not find the locality enlivening to the spirits, so he keeps well at the other side, and fortifies his mind, as he walks up and down, with a fragment of a song now and then, but after a few notes his voice dies, quavering, away. At intervals he

can hear far off in the city a burst of merriment, at the door of some wine shop, and he thinks wistfully of the enjoyment he is losing. There is a great deal in the companionship of his fellows, whoever they may be, and he averts his eyes from the heap which marks the trench looming through the obscurity. If he were only down yonder where it is warm and light, and good wine for the asking, it would be another matter; but here—they should not place one man alone here. It is inhuman, positively. However, in two hours, or less, he will be relieved; courage, then, and walk quickly. It is the cold, entirely the cold. He would not mind, not he, if whole ranks of Chouans were lying dead all round him if it were a little warmer. At last even the tantalising sounds from the cabaret die away, and utter silence seems to descend on the city.

Midnight. The hour tolls from the cathe-

dral, and the other churches, far and near, answer the iron tones. The sentry stops suddenly in his hurried tramp. What is that object, that white figure shining through the gloom? There, where *they* are lying in their last sleep? It hovers over the trench, dim, mysterious, awful. . . . It moves, it approaches him; yes, it is surely nearer now. What fearful sight will be revealed to his straining eyes? He dares not face it. He is a good patriot, but he still believes in ghosts. Wild with terror, his knees smiting together, his teeth chattering, he turns and flies; but he is no sooner past the narrow passage leading to the street than he stumbles over a stone, and falling headlong, swoons in extremity of fear.

Did he but know it, it is no ghost that he has seen and fled from. Among that heap of dead there is one living still; delivered almost, it would seem, by a miracle. It is

late, almost twelve o'clock, when Eulalie de St Hilaire wakes from her long unconsciousness, and slowly, painfully realises where she is. The cold night-wind is blowing in icy gusts on her face, the quiet stars are shining down from the dark vault above her. It is very silent, only something like a footstep not far off, falls on her ear. It is long before she can collect her thoughts sufficiently to make any movement, then she puts her hand out. It is wet, surely— Is this Eugène's arm on which her head is resting? Slowly, with difficulty, she raises herself. Yes, it is his face, white and fixed, close to hers. She touches it—it is very cold. Shot through the heart; it was his blood that reddened her hand just now. She does not know that, but she knows, with a sort of deadly stupor upon her, that he is dead. And all round her, and beside her, are other bodies, still and motionless as his. By some strange

providence she is the sole survivor of that dire slaughter, and she is unhurt. Ah, it is too awful, she *must* get away, she cannot remain here among these terrible silent forms. When she was brought here with the rest she was content to die with her brother; content, with a passive resignation; but now that she finds herself still living, the love of life re-awakens too, though it is only instinctive as yet, and the love of self-preservation dictates to her what to do. Yes, she must leave even Eugène now. She puts her arms round him, and kisses the dear, dead face once and again, and then feebly and painfully, for she is very weak and stiff, she rises, and extricating herself from another dead body which is lying across her, clambers out of the trench. Then she pauses, for she can discern a dark figure at the other side of the square, and believes that now, at any rate, she must be seen and captured.

Suddenly, however, as she makes an undecided step forward, she perceives the object of her terror run swiftly away and disappear. As she still stands irresolute, she bethinks her of Nanette. The old nurse may possibly be able to shelter her. At any rate, it is a chance, and the only one, and now, having a definite purpose in her mind, she makes her way, with feeble wavering steps, out of the convent square, almost stumbling over the guard's prostrate figure in the shadow of the outer wall. She has not very far to go, but it seems an eternity to her as she traverses the steep streets and narrow tortuous alleys, so narrow that not only they, but many of the streets themselves will admit of no vehicles on wheels. On each side are the old timber-framed houses, roofed with scales of slate, remaining as long surviving monuments of mediæval Angers. On the steep hill-side, in one of

these ancient dwellings, its gable towards the street, its very front covered with slate, Nanette lives now with her son—that same Gaston Trochu whom we saw in company with the Chevalier de Sabran, on an autumn afternoon, two years ago. He was then developing into what he has since become, and M. de Sabran, during their short intercourse, found him an apt pupil; perhaps he is beginning a retrograde course now. He keeps his mother in more comfort than she enjoyed at Cennes, and yet he cannot keep her from looking back regretfully, and the event of to-day, of which he is well aware, has gone far in his mind to excuse her. He cannot but acknowledge, remorsefully, that the Comte de St Hilaire was a good seigneur as far as he knew how, in answer to his mother's passion of tears. "But what would you?" he says, in a rueful attempt at philosophy, "it is the same for all."

The fugitive, by no means sure of her way, especially in the dark, at last finds herself in front of the tenement which, with some difficulty, she recognises. But now, how is she to get in? All is wrapped in silence; and, for a moment, she feels as it would be best to lie down and die there, she feels so forlorn and helpless. But desperate need suggests desperate attempts. Taking up in her hand some of the small, fine gravel from the street, she throws it against the dark window which juts out above her head. A pause, in which she can hear the irregular beating of her own heart. What if the noise should arouse an enemy, who would make her once more a prisoner? It is really only a few seconds before the casement opens slowly, and she hears Nanette's cracked voice inquiring who is there.

"Nanette," whispers the girl, "it is I,

Eulalie, thy child. Open, for the love of God."

An inarticulate exclamation answers her, and in a few minutes, during which she clings, exhausted, to the carved door-post, the door itself is cautiously opened, and Nanette's trembling hands draw her hurriedly in.

"My little one, my angel! alive and not her spirit," sobs the old woman. "Eh, the hours I have passed in mourning for thee, and in prayers for thy repose, and now to see thee—"

"Nanette, thou must hide me—" begins Eulalie, in a swift, terrified whisper, as she clings to her, and then, at last, the tears break forth with wild force. Nanette's ready wits are instantly at work, and, though burning with curiosity, she asks no questions; nor does she rest till she has placed her restored nursling in her bed, and watched by her till

the hysterical sobs have subsided into profound sleep.

Then she looks at the red stains on the brocade gown, and shakes her head pitifully, before she falls to pondering on the next step to be takrn. By the time Eulalie wakes from her heavy slumber, Nanette's plan is almost matured.

Neither her son nor his wife have heard the disturbance of the night, but it is absolutely necessary to confide in them. They, unconscious, have gone off to their work by the time Eulalie wakes to see the brown old face bending tenderly over her, with a cup of soup in her hand.

"Why am I here? — and thou, Nanette?" she says, in the bewilderment of the moment. "Ah, I remember now; Eugène—" and she turns her face away with a passion of tears. Nanette is very gentle with her; she lays her withered

hand on the small white one, and lets her cry on.

"Thou must take this, mignonne," she says, at last, "and then we must think of what thou hast to do."

"To do?" Eulalie's sad eyes look up inquiringly.

"Thou must not stay here," proceeds Nanette, "I could not shelter thee long. No, Gaston must help us."

"Gaston!" Eulalie shrinks back involuntarily. An expression of pain crosses the wrinkled face of her nurse.

"Ah, yes," she says, "Gaston has done very wrong. I do not understand half he says, it is true; but he is sorry for many things that happen now. He was one of those who went to Cennes the other night, but it was to watch over thee and M. le Comte. He would have saved you if he could, believe it, Mademoiselle. We can trust him."

Eulalie does not answer. She is too weary and sick at heart to care very much what becomes of her, so she escapes. Let Nanette do what she pleases with her.

"There is Clarisse," proceeds Nanette, rather doubtfully, as if speaking to herself; "one must tell her, and she—well, Gaston must curb her tongue."

When evening closes in, and the family meet once more, Nanette takes heart of grace, and imparts her precious secret to her son and his wife. Gaston, as she expected, seems malleable, being, indeed, relieved to hear the news, but Clarisse looks black. She is a handsome, stalwart Normande, from Caen, that hot-bed of republicanism, and has absolutely no sympathy with the feudal prejudices to which her mother-in-law clings fondly.

"Let us see the little demoiselle, la mère,"

she says ominously, and Nanette, inwardly quaking, goes up to fetch her young guest for this alarming inspection. Eulalie is still lying on her bed with closed eyes. She is not crying now, she seems to have wept all her tears away, but she rises passively at the old woman's bidding, and follows her with implicit obedience. As Nanette leads her into the kitchen, both husband and wife look searchingly and curiously at her. She has put on her blood-stained dress again, and her long, fair hair falls back, and over her shoulders, framing the sad white face. Her eyes are dry, but they are full of patient, unutterable sorrow, and even so, appeal more strongly than any fear or entreaty. Gaston utters an inarticulate exclamation, and, going up to her, with a rough respect, kisses her cold hand. Clarisse hesitates for a moment longer, looking fixedly at the pathetic figure. Some of her ideas undergo a considerable

modification during that instant's survey. Then she turns to her mother-in-law.

"Enough said," she says, "we will save her; the poor little one."

CHAPTER XXV.

FLIGHT.

"A river, with still sleek tide."

Gaston Trochu was a good patriot, but with all his principles and prejudices, he had never been able to root out from his heart the instinctive feudal veneration for the Seigneur; and especially for one such as the Comte de St Hilaire. His mother, moreover, since he had insisted on her coming to live with him at Angers, had been by no means silent. She treated his "red" views with profound contempt, not even professing to understand them. She took care to fill his ears with praises of M. Le Comte, and her beloved Mademoiselle; and, if his wife was an ardent

democrat, and would in Paris have adopted the role of the "tricoteuse," the influences were, at least, easily balanced. Besides, to say the truth, Gaston had begun, in his own mind, to look on at this wholesale slaughter with some misgivings, his liberal education not being sufficiently complete to banish all scruples of humanity. Therefore, he really had gone to Cennes with the vague hope of being able to serve the prisoners in some way, though that hope proved delusive. He was honestly glad that Mdlle. de St Hilaire was alive and safe, and was ready to risk a good deal to assist her escape. As for Clarisse, she was less logical. She fully approved of the executions, in theory, as disposing readily of a good many obnoxious people; but when she was brought face to face with this one poor little victim, and her mute appeal for pity, all her own womanly feelings were awakened, and she resolved,

without any reflections on the broader features of the case, to lend her aid to the uttermost also. Nay, having once enlisted in the cause, she was prepared to go to greater lengths even than her husband.

"Mademoiselle must start at break of day," said Nanette, unfolding her plan.

"Why not to-night?" asked her son.

"Because," said his mother, "she must go in thy boat. Thou wouldst go to thy melon-field after the frost, but if anyone saw the boat at night, they would suspect something."

Clarisse was listening with contracted brows.

"La mère is right," she said, nodding her head; "thou must go as usual. Happily, it is market-day; therefore, no one will notice if it is very early. I, too, will go with thee, as if to bring back the boat."

"Eh, and what good will that do?" asked

her husband, unable to draw conclusions with the same rapidity.

"Why," returned his wife, with a slight tinge of contempt in her voice, "thou canst land at the melon-field, and I can take the little citoyenne on till it is safe for her to land."

Eulalie had been sitting passively by, hearing them speak in turn, almost as if the conversation concerned some one else; but now she roused herself to ask—

"And must I go on alone?"

Nanette embraced her.

"I will go with thee, my cherished," she said, "I will never leave thee again, till I see thee among friends who can protect thee."

"Thou go!" ejaculated Gaston, in great astonishment, while Eulalie stole her fair arms gratefully round the old woman's neck. Nanette nodded.

"But yes. I am old, but I am strong, at least as strong as my little one here. I owe

much to her noble house too. Besides, there is no one else to go."

No one could controvert this last fact, and Mdlle. de St Hilaire was manifestly unfit to be cast on her own resources, so the matter was very quickly settled.

Before dawn Nanette roused her nursling, and dressed her carefully in some of Clarisse's clothes, staining also the small white hands which might have betrayed her, even as Mary Stuart's fair hands, by their whiteness, discovered her, and sent her back to weary captivity on Loch Leven.

Locking up the house, the family without difficulty reached the riverside, and here the disguised fugitive was made to lie down in the bottom of the boat. Others soon began to put off from the shore, rowed mostly by women, as was long the custom on the Maine and Loire.

A dreary, misty morning it was on the

great river. Behind, through the grey haze, loomed the seventeen towers of the Castle of Angers, with their bands of white stone and black slate; and the old town, with all its devious ways and steep alleys, rising on its hills on each side of the Maine, with the graceful spire and towers of St Maurice's Cathedral soaring upwards. Before, the mighty river swept on to meet the Loire, between its banks of slate, covered mostly with thick vegetation, but showing the black surface here and there. Eulalie lay still and motionless. Nanette, wrapped in her cloak, sat by her, now and then whispering a word of courage and consolation, while she adjusted, with loving hands, the covering she had placed over the trembling young frame.

At the melon-field Gaston was put ashore, and then Clarisse rowed steadily on towards Nantes. Past wood and field, past deserted convent and ruined manor, past farm and

village they glided. Eulalie could now sit up and look about her, but she said little, willing to leave everything implicitly in her preservers' hands.

From time to time they, on their part, exchanged a few words, and towards mid-day Nanette produced a little store of provisions she had brought with her, and strove with little success to induce Mademoiselle to take some food. She herself and her daughter-in-law ate heartily and contentedly, and then what was left was carefully put up again for future need.

The day was already far advanced, and they had left Angers miles behind, when Clarisse at last made up her mind to land her precious freight.

Having expressed herself to this effect, briefly, she shoved the boat into a convenient spot for the purpose. It was in a bend of the Loire, shaded by great trees, which stood

close to the water's edge, and the absolute silence reigning round told of no human habitation. Eulalie looked round her as the boat stopped, with some curiosity and a little regret, for to her wearied mind and exhausted frame the journey hither had been soothing rather than otherwise.

"Where are we going, Nanette?" she asked.

"Do not tell me, la mère," interrupted Clarisse gruffly. "I shall not betray thee; but, after all, it is best I should have little to betray, and if I know nothing, why, I can say nothing."

As Eulalie was slowly stepping out of the boat a grateful impulse made her turn to her younger preserver, of whom she felt, it is true, more than half afraid.

"Adieu," she said gently. "You have been very good to me, and I cannot tell how I should thank you—"

She hesitated for a second, and then lifted her trembling lips. Clarisse stooped and kissed her roughly.

"Go," she said; "thou art an aristocrat, but I would do it again if it was to do."

Then she turned her boat, and seating herself once more was speedily lost to sight.

CHAPTER XXVI.

REUNION.

God's ichor fills the hearts that bleed ;
The best fruit loads the broken bough,
And in the wounds our sufferings plough,
Immortal love sows sovereign seed.

VICTOR DE LIMEUIL had, as we have seen, followed the changeful fortunes of Henri de la Rochejaquelein upon the retreat from Angers. After the carnage of Savenai, dire as it was, that boy-hero, refusing to give up all hope, and indomitable of spirit, took refuge in the forest of Vesins. Here De Limeuil joined him in a few days, and the two young leaders, with the small body of peasants whom they succeeded in drawing together, harassed the enemy in every way that their limited means afforded. Long afterwards Victor de

Limeuil cherished the memory of the close friendship of those weeks as one of his dearest remembrances; and, when people talked admiringly of the crusade of La Vendée and its youthful Bayard, its knight "without fear and without reproach," he could say with wistful pride, "I knew and loved him."

"Whom the gods love die young" is an ancient and well-worn saying, but it was amply verified in the case of La Rochejaquelein. In the month of March, with the slender force at his command, he attacked and vanquished the garrison of Nuaille.

Two Republican soldiers had been taken by his men, who were on the point of shooting them, when La Rochejaquelein ran up to the spot where they were still struggling fiercely with their captors.

"Surrender, quick," he cried, as he reached the spot, "and your lives shall be spared."

"Why, there are too many 'blues' already," said one of the peasants discontentedly. "What is the good of our victory if we may not use it."

"We have seen what has come of such mercy," said another; "you are too tender-hearted, M. de la Rochejaquelein."

A savage glance shot from the eyes of one of the soldiers as he caught the name. Quick as thought he raised his musket again, and with one cry Henri de la Rochejaquelein fell dead in the arms of Victor de Limeuil, who had followed him closely. He did not fall unavenged. Victor's ready hand sent another bullet to the heart of the slayer, and the two were buried in one grave, the Vendéan noble and the nameless soldier. Only twenty-one years old. Yet it was a death to be envied in those days. Better than the guillotine at Paris, than the fusillades at Angers, than the boats at Nantes. And,

more than all, one imperishable wreath mingles with the laurels on La Rochejaquelein's tomb, in that he died in the noble endeavour to save life, even the life of an enemy.

But all was over then. The hopes of his friends were buried in that untimely grave, and they, abandoning all endeavour to make head against their terrible enemy, dispersed to seek safety, each for himself. Then Victor de Limeuil resolved, if possible, to try to rejoin his mother, who had found a temporary refuge in a remote corner of Bretagne, some distance westward of their own home. It was a journey beset with dangers to any one who could, in the remotest degree, be suspected of complicity in the late revolt, and even to those who were beyond suspicion, for the authorities were not particular on this point. The "blues" were scouring the devoted country in all directions, and all

heads of houses were rigorously interdicted from giving shelter to a Vendéan fugitive.

Victor de Limeuil, it is true, had not been campaigning for nothing all this last year. He was inured to hardship and fatigue, and the guerilla warfare in which he had been trained had taught him how most readily to elude discovery. But he had more on his mind than his own condition and probable fate, though that might be considered absorbing enough. He had heard nothing directly from Cennes since his last hurried interview with Eulalie on the Angers road, when he found her kneeling in the snow beside the dead girl. Rumours had indeed reached him of wholesale executions at the latter place, but he had no means of ascertaining whether the St Hilaires were or were not among the victims. Therefore, in addition to the privation and bodily discomfort he now endured, he had to bear constant anxiety of the sharpest

kind, which was no sweetener to the uneasy rest he had often to find in a hollow tree, such as Madame de Bonchamps, a fugitive at the same time, thought a most luxurious lodging for herself and her sick children.

This evening Victor was better sheltered than usual. Utterly weary and spent, he had found a refuge in a small lonely farm-house, after a day spent in doubling, as it were, on his enemies, for he had been walking many miles backwards and forwards in a comparatively small circuit of country. The farmer and his wife, simple, kindly people, who had sent forth a son to fight for God and the King, and to return no more, received De Limeuil kindly, and gave him food, but they dared not keep him in their house. He was therefore relegated to the barn, where, on the appearance of the "blues" he could, if necessary, hide under the straw. He was on his way thither, from the house, when his

attention and that of his host was attracted to two wayfarers who were slowly approaching. Alarm was at once suppressed on perceiving that they were women, and their aspect was certainly the last calculated to excite any apprehension. Victor de Limeuil and the farmer watched them curiously and compassionately, for their languid, dragging steps bespoke long travel and exhaustion, and they were evidently on their way to ask for shelter.

One was an old, brown-faced, keen-eyed woman in the garb of an Angevine peasant, evidently the worse for exposure and journeying; the other, a girl in the same attire; and it was difficult to decide which looked the most thoroughly weary and overcome with fatigue. As they came up to the two men, the old woman addressed herself to the farmer.

"We have come a long way, my grand-

child and I," she began, "let us, of charity, rest here for the night."

The man was kindly disposed, but he was timid and frightened, reasonably enough, considering all that was going on; and he was beginning to think he had too many visitors on his hands.

"There is always the barn," he said, hesitatingly, a look of miserable perplexity struggling with natural pity for the two helpless travellers. At that moment the girl, whose fair head had hung down wearily, while she clung to her companion's arm, looked up, and her eyes met Victor's.

"Eulalie!"

"Oh, Victor!—at last."

They were in each other's arms; Eulalie sobbing in abandonment of utter relief; Victor completely bewildered for the moment.

The good farmer's compassion overcame his scruples at last. He gave the newly

arrived fugitives food, and permitted them to take shelter in the barn.

There, their fatigues for the time forgotten, Victor and Eulalie could pour into each other's eager ears the strange and terrible experiences which they had passed through; while Nanette put in her word now and then, or snored a drowsy accompaniment. Victor had the story of Savenai to tell, and his young friend and leader's death at Nuaille; and Eulalie the relation of her escape from the very jaws of death. If her tears again fell for Eugène's sake as she told it, they were softened and less bitter; for it seemed to her that she could never be so desolate again. She had found Victor—he would take care of her now.

The two, so strangely re-united, resolved, at least, to attempt to pursue their way together.

"It cannot be more difficult than what we

have already done," said Victor, manfully, "at any rate, we can try."

"If not, I think I should die," whispered Eulalie imploringly. "Oh let us not be parted, for we should never find each other again."

Victor laughed.

"I should find thee," he said, reassuringly; "it is true thou hast found me this time; but if we are obliged—mind, I only say, if we are obliged to separate now, it shall not be for long, trust me."

They made up their minds, with Nanette's concurrence, to start before day-break, and in the chill morning of early spring they set off. Their difficulties were by no means over. Often when they thought they had found a haven of refuge after long wandering, they were forced to be up and away, at the news that the "blues" were upon them. Often they suffered hunger; often, the two women

especially, could scarcely drag their wearied limbs, step by step; but they, at least, succeeded in keeping together. At length, with infinite labour, and after countless dangers, they reached the temporary abode of Madame de Limeuil. She, having long given up both for lost, received her only son as if given back to her from the dead, and Eulalie de St Hilaire with almost equal affection. The latter she had not seen since she was a little child; but she looked upon her now, not only as the long-chosen and desired bride of her well-beloved Victor, but with the tender, pitying reverence due to one who had passed through such deep affliction.

Here, the fugitives were, for the time, in comparative safety; but they dared not remain long. The time had come to say farewell to France, if not for ever, at least for a long and indefinite period; for the Terror spared no one in its remorseless fury.

Therefore, a proscribed and hunted priest, fugitive like themselves, was found to give the marriage blessing to the two, betrothed under far other auspices; when nothing could have seemed less probable than that the representatives of those ancient houses should be in danger of their lives, and bereft of land and substance. It was a melancholy wedding, in haste and secrecy, hallowed only, beyond the holy service itself, by the prayers of the mother and the faithful nurse, and the recollection of Eugène was fresh in Eulalie's sore heart. But suspense and suffering and danger had drawn those two hearts closer together, perhaps, than prosperity could ever have done. A few days more, and after a good deal of hope deferred, they embarked in a fishing boat not far from Dol, and, with some difficulty, succeeded in reaching the English shore. Madame de Limeuil of course went with them, and Nanette too,

who had devoted herself so loyally to "her child's" chequered fortunes, cast in her lot with her now for good and all.

So they left France, poor and almost friendless; and having in the future no prospect but of poverty in a strange land; but strong in their love, and in the courage that could face everything, if only they could be together. So it came to pass that happiness even, was possible, and being possible, was attained; and flowers bloomed for them, even in their land of exile. It was not that they forgot. Happiness does not mean oblivion; the remembrance of those past sufferings and trials was fresh and living always; but they learnt to regard them as a sharp experience, a pain which enhanced the haven of peace to which they had at last attained. But England was never to them but a place of sojourning; France was the home to which their yearning hearts still

turned. As they talked together of the pleasant days in old Anjou, they never, in spite of appearances, in spite of the apparent hopelessness of such ideas, lost the faith that some day—it might be near, it might be very far distant, their longing eyes would again behold the flaxfields, the vines, the stately rivers, the fragrant woods of the beloved land beyond the sea.

BOOK III.—CALM.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BEYOND THESE VOICES.

Oh, I fling my spirit backward,
  And I pass o'er years of pain
All I loved is rising round me
  All the lost returns again.

Brighter, fairer far than living,
  With no trace of woe or pain,
Robed in everlasting beauty,
  Shall I see thee once again.

By the light that never fadeth
  Underneath eternal skies ;
When the dawn of Resurrection
  Breaks o'er deathless Paradise.

TWENTY-ONE years have passed away. Twenty-one years since the Reign of Terror fell with the fall of Robespierre. A new and fairer France has arisen from the ashes of past horrors ; almost a generation has sprung up since her soil was watered so freely with blood.

A great drama has just been played out on the theatre of the world's history; a drama that will leave its impress to all time. In these twenty-one years France has known the Directory, the Consulate, and the splendid pageant of the Empire; and now, at length, a Bourbon has come back, "having learnt nothing and forgotten nothing," and sits on the throne of Clovis, as Louis the Eighteenth. But it is all very well for him to adopt as his motto, "one Frenchman more;" as if that were the only change. Such an upheaval as that which rent the surface of all things a score of years ago, cannot but leave its mark. It is well, in the eternal order of things, that it should be so; but there are many changes which are sore and heavy, many memories which will not heal. There are but a few to whom all these vicissitudes do not seem to signify much. Of these few, however, is Léon de Sabran. He has managed to keep his

head on his shoulders, when many better men failed to do so. He foresaw the fate of the Dictator, and disengaged himself from that danger in time, and in the same manner, through succeeding events, has kept himself afloat, and not only so, but has taken the turn of the tide. Let him pass. He reaps as he has sown, and should be satisfied; but it may be that the rewards he tastes of, turn but to Dead Sea fruit, and if a busy fiend called Remorse does not yet knock at his closed heart; at least he says as he looks drearily around him, all is vanity.

The Restoration has brought back many exiles from the lands which gave them shelter, to build up again the desolate homes, to which they have looked so long with loving, yearning eyes. Some, it is true, have found a last resting-place in a strange country; many who return, leave a grave and a memory behind them. Two, here in Angers, have

come back for the first time this autumn afternoon.

M. and Madame de Limeuil who made their home in England, have come over from Cennes to-day.

Madame has, in a measure, taken possession of it, but it was partly burnt in the Terror, and is fallen into a terribly ruinous state. She and her husband have come from Bretagne to see it again, and after this visit to Angers, will return to Limeuil.

Of course they are altered; so many years, and such years, cannot but leave their mark; but there is much left of the Eulalie de St Hilaire whom we remember in the gentle face, turned to Victor, as she says,

"Let us come *there* first."

So, having left their carriage at an inn, they, and their children, a tall boy and girl, dutifully silent in the presence of their parents, make their way through the tortuous alleys

and steep streets, along which Mdlle. de St Hilaire fled for her life on a certain night of horror. They turn from the open Place, under a low archway, which brings them into a small, dark square. It is a gloomy, silent place, coming out of the mellow sunshine. The windows, looking into it, are fenced with strong, iron bars, and uneven mounds of earth rise, here and there, almost to the level of the sills. A woman has seen the party approach, and hurries up to offer her services as cicerone.

"Yes, yes," she says, volubly; "it was here, the fusillade; and over yonder, that was where they fell, the poor innocents, Madame would observe."

But Madame is deadly pale, and clutches her husband's arm. He gives the officious guide money, hastily, and thanks her, saying they know the place. She is surprised but not offended, seeing she has got what she

wanted, and goes cheerfully off, singing to herself.

Close under the wall, opposite, there is a long, high bank, a sort of tumulus ; Madame de Limeuil goes over, with faltering steps, and falls on her knees, weeping. The girl, awe-struck, whispers to her brother.

" It was, then, here, that the Uncle Eugène, who was so good, was shot ? "

He nods gravely.

"And where the poor little mother escaped, too." They watch her reverently and pitifully. It is the re-opening of a chapter in their mother's life in which they have no part, and it feels a strange experience to them.

M. de Limeuil stands by Eulalie, silent, for a short space, then he speaks.

" Dear, be comforted. *He* would have it so."

She rises slowly, and looks back at him, through her tears.

"Thou art right, my friend, but it brings back the old pain, to come here."

"Then I am sorry I brought thee," he says, tenderly.

"No," she answers, resolutely choking back her sobs; "I am glad to have come. But we will go now. Ah, Victor, it is thy love which has consoled me, so that I can think, without bitterness, of my Eugène in Paradise."

They go quietly and slowly away, as if from some hallowed place; and then turn their steps towards the Convent of the Carmélites.

The walls and principal houses of Angers are riddled with the balls of the Vendéans, when they made their fruitless attack, and some of the streets are still almost deserted. This is one of them, a quiet, out of the way corner, and the grass grows, in patches, between the stones; for the Convent was sup-

pressed in the Terror, and has only lately received its rightful inhabitants.

At the door, Victor de Limeuil and his son turn away, and only Eulalie and the girl enter.

A lay-sister leads them up a dark, stone stair-case, into a large, dull room on the first floor. It is divided from side to side by an iron grating, reaching from floor to ceiling; in the middle of which there is a door, divided horizontally, the upper part of which, only, is open. The further and larger half of the room is, in effect, the chapel of the Convent. At the end there is a "dim rich" altar, vested in crimson, and the light from the barred windows falls on the holy vessels, and gleaming candlesticks, which make the sole point of sparkle and colour; for the rest of the chapel is bare of ornament.

A moderate assemblage of women and girls, forming a congregation, are already waiting in the outer space; and within the grating

kneel the motionless figures of the religious, in the brown habit of the order. All but one wear the black veil; she, as yet, the white one of the novice.

Side by side, with bowed heads and folded hands, they kneel; and Eulalie, clasping Eugénie's hand in hers, sinks on her knees too.

Mass is over, and now the novice rises, and, led by the superior, comes slowly forward to the door of the grating, and faces the little congregation without. She never lifts her eyes, but kneels erect, motionless, looking steadily downwards.

It has been a beautiful face once; nay, it is a beautiful face now; but on it are stamped the ineffaceable traces of great suffering. Yet, though white almost as the veil which clasps it so closely, it now bears, nevertheless, the seal of a great repose; but Eulalie de Limeuil looks at it through a mist of tears,

for it is the face of Gabrielle de Thouars. . . It is as if she were in a confused and sorrowful dream, that Eulalie watches the service go on; the censing and asperging of the novice, the black veil placed on her bowed head, which admits her into the ranks of the professed nuns, and removes her for ever from outer hopes and cares. It is all sad and strange and unreal; but it is over at last, and the congregation, such as it is, streams out. Madame de Limeuil, however, lingers in the hall, to ask if she may not see the newly-professed nun. There are some objections raised at first, but it is known that Madame was a great sufferer in the Terror, and a once dear friend of sister Ursule; indeed, she had been specially invited to-day to see the profession. In effect, if Madame will have the distinguished goodness to return in an hour's time, it shall be arranged. So the mother and daughter walk

up and down in the shady, quiet street, and Eulalie tells something of the tragic story of that friend of years ago. The girl's ready sympathy is soothing and stimulating too; and the time does not seem very long until they can re-enter the convent door again. Eugénie is silent, and looks awed, as they are shown into the parlour, cool and shady. A few minutes steal by, and then the tall figure of Sister Ursule comes noiselessly in, and advances to the grille. Eulalie cannot speak for the first moment; she is striving to master herself, and it is the nun who breaks the silence. The old sweet voice, but it has lost the careless ring of other days.

"I am glad you have come, my Eulalie; no, don't cry; see, I am content."

"But not happy," says Eulalie, brokenly; "Ah, Gabrielle, I have loved thee so, always; and I thought—I thought thou wouldst come and live with us now."

"Earthly happiness is not for all of us," says Sister Ursule, in the same calm, low voice. "I am glad thou hast it, little one, for it is well deserved; and thou didst suffer a martyrdom, but for me, it must be penitence—: and that is thy child; bring her to see me sometimes, Eulalie."

"But it is such pain to see thee here—" Eulalie breaks down altogether.

"No, it must not be that," says the nun, her voice faltering for the first time, "think of me as of one you once loved, who sinned from heedlessness, and vanity, and waywardness; who has long suffered; and who has at last found the way of peace. There are more roads than one to Paradise, Eulalie; Père Florian, and thy brother, and—one other, found it sharp and swift; thine, I pray, may be long and flowery. Mine must be the way of repentance and expiation; but they meet at last. Now go, my Eulalie."

She makes the sign of the cross, solemnly, and turns, and goes softly away.

Long years of exile, spent in ministering to the friend who had received her, till that friend's death, a year ago. A never ceasing remorse and regret, gnawing at her heart: this has been her story.

Who shall say that Gabrielle de Thouar's penitence, by whatever way she testifies it, is not accepted? Nay, that after twenty years of care and uncertainty, this haven of peace is not restful to the bruised heart? Overstrained and morbid, perhaps, this agony of sorrow for a little fickleness, a little vanity. Be it so; we are not the judges. She finds a divine medicine for her sickness, even though it flow into her soul by channels to which we are unused.

Time will pass over her here, and smooth away the furrows, and heal the long-smarting wounds. The patient footsteps toil on un-

complainingly, but the burden of life grows yearly lighter; nevertheless, it is with a solemn thankfulness that Sister Ursule lays it down at last, in the quiet convent of the Carmélites, after many years of humble observance; and passes "to where beyond these voices there is peace."

CONCLUSION.

Having brought this tale to an end it seems to me right that I should, in this place, mention that, putting aside the purely historical incidents, those which belong to the story itself, and on which it is founded, are also true. For instance, the denunciation to the Committee of a Royalist by his rival, to gratify personal revenge and remove an obstacle, is a fact which occurred, however, not in Paris, but at Lyons, at the same period.

As to the history of the brother and sister I tell it here, as it was told to me, without amplification ; and having retained even the Christian name of the latter. That the girl's escape, the sole survivor of the fusillade at Angers, may appear little short of the mar-

vellous, I allow; but for that I am not answerable. That she did so escape is a fact, and, I believe, she survived the Revolution for many years, having succeeded in rejoining her friends in the manner I have tried to describe. J. R. H.

THE END.

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